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Nick Carter Stories

THE DOOM OF SANG TU
OR
NICK CARTER'S GOLDEN FOE

NICK CARTER STORIES

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THE DOOM OF SANG TU;

Or, NICK CARTER'S GOLDEN FOE.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

IN BAD HANDS.

"Chief! Chief! Where are you?"

"Here I am, Patsy. What's the matter? What are you so disturbed about?"

But Patsy Garvan could not go on for the moment. He had burst into the library in Nick Carter's home in Madison Avenue, in a state of excitement entirely foreign to his usual self-possessed demeanor, and he could not get over it. The great detective could not imagine what was the matter with his assistant.

"He's gone, chief!" Patsy panted, as he flung himself into a chair.

"Who's gone? Where's he gone? What's it all about?" insisted Nick Carter impatiently. "Pull yourself together, and let me know."

"It's Chick! They've got him! The Yellow Tong! Oh, why didn't I stay with him? Then they never could have done anything! Gee! I'm always doing bone-head things! I ought to be in a home for the feeble-minded. That's where I belong. Give me a pair of scissors and I'll cut out some paper dolls. What right have I to be in the detective business? I'm a boob, with a small 'b.' That's all yours truly is."

There could be no doubt about the deep distress of the ordinarily gay and joyous Patsy. All the buoyancy and self-confidence seemed to have been crushed out of him.

Although Nick Carter was worried over the little Patsy had said, he could not help gazing upon him in pity. Well he knew that something serious must have happened to bring his assistant to such a despairing state.

"Tell me about it," he directed, lighting a cigar, and assuming a carelessness that he did not feel. "Did you follow the man I believed was Sang Tu, the secret head of the Yellow Tong?"

"Yes. Chick and I both went after him, when you kept after the rest of the bunch. You told us to keep a little way behind, so that they wouldn't notice us, but not to come away till we knew where they'd gone."

Nick Carter nodded, without speaking.

"When those two Chinamen in long overcoats got off the train at Yonkers and hustled out of the station, Chick and I were going to follow them."

"Yes, I know."

"But you told us you'd attend to them, and that we were to trail the other man, who looked like a professor, with his spectacles and the book he had been reading all the way from Albany."

"His two friends called him 'Senator,'" remarked Nick. "But, as you say, he looked like a professor. He might have been a man holding a chair of philosophy at some university. It's a weakness of the Yellow Tong that all their big men affect the professor make-up. Like many rascals, their cunning overreaches itself. The grave aspect of a scholarly tutor in higher education is a good disguise, but when it is repeated over and over, naturally one becomes suspicious."

Nick Carter had been speaking in a musing tone, and Patsy Garvan, who had calmed down a little, from sheer exhaustion, looked puzzled.

"I don't quite get you," he protested.

"I don't see why not," protested Nick. "There was Professor Tolo, who pretended to be a Japanese, and Professor Ched Ramar, who posed as an East Indian. Now, here is Sang Tu himself—if it is he—who looks like one of the faculty of a theological seminary, whether he calls himself professor or not. Moreover, there is so little of the Mongolian in his features that you would not know him for a Chinaman without a very close in-

spection. But never mind about that just now. Tell me about Chick. Not that I have any fear for him."

"Perhaps you will, when I tell you," rejoined Patsy. "When we traced some of the men you believed were members of the Yellow Tong to Albany, and Chick and me went with you, it looked like a cinch that we'd nail Sang Tu when we got to New York."

"That's what I believed," assented Nick. "But I was not quite sure this was my man. Besides, I wanted to find out where the headquarters of the tong were."

"I don't believe they're in New York," remarked Patsy. "Don't you think they're near Yonkers?"

"Probably not. I don't believe Sang Tu would have got off the train there if his retreat were anywhere in that neighborhood. He may have suspected me, and I dare say some of his spies were on the train, to pick out you and Chick."

"Our disguises were all good."

"I know they were. You look like a college boy in his freshman year. That funny straw hat, trousers 'cuffed,' and the tan shoes all belong to the campus, and your fresh red face would pass for a young fellow of about eighteen anywhere."

"I'm a durned sight older than that," grunted Patsy.

"Well, anyhow, to get back to what we were saying. What has happened to Chick?"

"We went through the town—and, you know, Yonkers is pretty busy at seven o'clock in the evening—at a fairly swift pace. This man you think is Sang Tu moved along as if he knew his way—any one might have thought he lived in Yonkers—and I saw him touch his hat to different people now and then."

"Did they return the salutations?" asked Nick quietly.

"Some did, and others didn't. They only looked dazed, as if they wondered who it was giving them the high sign."

"Naturally. That hat touching was a bluff," smiled Nick Carter, as he took his cigar from his lips and looked to see that it was burning evenly. "He didn't know anybody in Yonkers, most likely."

"After a while I saw three other men walking the same way this professor was. I'll call him 'professor,' for short. The men wore raincoats which covered them from their chins to their heels, and they had soft hats on, like the professor. There was nothing about them that you'd notice particularly. They were like any Americans you might meet on the street anywhere. But I saw that they were keeping just about so far from the first man, and Chick and I both knew they were all friends."

"Go on a little faster, Patsy," admonished Nick.

"All right! Chick and I did not keep together, of course, but once in a while we'd happen to pass each other and whisper a word or two. Well, we got outside the town and I saw them walking along the road kind of carelesslike. There were other people there, too. It was warm, and just as it begins to get dark is the time when you'll see lots of young couples strolling on an avenue of that sort, with the trees meeting overhead and the frogs singing in the marshes below."

"Yes, yes," ejaculated the detective impatiently.

"It got so dark that I thought I could venture to go closer to my men. I didn't want them to give me the slip. There were trees that you could sneak behind, you know, and the shadows were so black that, except where there was an arc light, it was as dark as a cellar. However, I made out Chick some distance ahead, and I said to myself it was all right, so long as he was keeping up with the procession."

"This is a long story, Patsy. Where is Chick?"

"I don't know where he is. All I can tell you is that a motor car suddenly came shooting out of a cross-road, and these four guys I was trailing got in. Then Chick ran up to the car, and was trying to fix himself on behind, when they got wise to him. Three of them jumped out, grabbed him, chucked him into the hind seat, went in after him, and banged the door. Before I could get there, the car had rushed off like a shot out of a gun, and there was nothing but a red light in the distance. And that wasn't there long. Gee! That car could travel!"

"What did you do then?"

"I did some quick figuring, and I thought that, at the rate they were going, they wouldn't stop short of Tarrytown, anyhow. That's ten miles from Yonkers, and it would not take them more than about fifteen minutes to get there at the rate they were traveling. I hustled back to the railroad station, and caught a local train that put me in Tarrytown about half an hour after they must have got there."

"And did you find them?"

"I think I know about where they are. They had rushed through Tarrytown, I found out from a policeman, and had kept on going up the hills. The cop said he would have arrested them for speeding, but they got away from him. He caught the number of the car. It was—— Wait a minute! I had it written down. Here it is."

Patsy brought out his notebook, and Nick Carter copied the number on a scrap of paper. It was "K206578."

"It was a big touring car, and it was painted gray, with a white stripe around it. That may help us to find it. There is only one place anywhere up there that has been taken by anybody lately, and it is at the back of a wood, with only a wagon road running through it to the house. It used to be a private hospital, they say. But about six months ago a wealthy New Yorker who wanted rest, leased the house and land around it for a long term, and he is living there alone, with four or five men to wait on him."

"Do the people know his name?"

"Yes. It is Jones—William Jones."

Nick Carter smiled, and Patsy, looking into his face, grinned in response.

"Think the name is a fake, don't you, chief?"

"Certainly sounds like it. However, we will find out. You don't feel too tired to go out again to-night, do you? It's nearly eleven o'clock."

"Too tired?" cried Patsy scornfully. "Well, I guess not! Chick would not be too tired to go after me if I was in the fix I think he is."

"Very well. I'll telephone Danny Maloney to bring the big car around. There is nothing like promptitude in these matters. You can keep your college-boy disguise. I will put on something else, after I have phoned."

He called up Danny at the garage and instructed him to have the big car at the door in ten minutes. Then he went up to his room.

The man who came into the library nine minutes later was nothing at all like the quietly dressed detective

who had gone out. His clothes now were of a decidedly "loud" cut, while the material was much more pronounced in pattern than anything Nick Carter ordinarily allowed himself. It was a large black-and-white check, with a red-and-white-striped four-in-hand tie and a big diamond flashing in the middle of it. Patent-leather shoes and a hat of the latest block completed his attire.

He carried a thick cane, with a heavy, silver-trimmed handle, and Patsy decided that the cane would make a good weapon at close quarters.

To go with these clothes, the detective had reddened his cheeks and put on a wig of light hair. He had all the appearance of one who was out-of-doors most of the time, and who had not avoided the sun and wind.

"Well, Patsy!" he said, smiling. "I see you think I'm all right. Let's go and look for Chick. You have your gun, I suppose?"

"Certainly, chief! Here it is!"

Patsy showed a serviceable automatic pistol, and convinced himself that it had plenty of cartridges in it. Then, as he gazed inquiringly at Nick, the latter took his own automatic from an inside pocket of his coat, for Patsy's satisfaction, and put it back.

"You understand, Patsy, shooting is to be the last thing. Stand them off with everything else before you pull a trigger."

"That's a general order," replied Patsy. "You tell us that always. This isn't any different from any other case. Though, if I were to see those chinks handing Chick a raw deal, I don't know whether I could keep my gun out of action."

Patsy was out of the library and on his way downstairs to the front door, to get into the powerful six-cylinder touring car at the curb, with Danny Maloney at the wheel, and Nick Carter was in the act of locking his table drawer, when the telephone bell rang.

With customary caution, the detective closed the door of the room as he put the receiver to his ear.

"Who is that? . . . Matthew Bentham? Oh, yes, all right! This is Carter. Go ahead."

For several minutes Nick Carter held the receiver and listened intently to what was coming over the wire. If anybody else had been in the room he could have noted many changes of expression in the detective's keen face. At first doubt, then astonishment, then eagerness, followed by perplexity.

"I don't know hardly what to say——" he began, into the transmitter. "I was just going out on a very important matter. . . . What's that?"

He listened again for a minute or two. Then, with the sharp accents of one who had made up his mind, he called back:

"Very well. I'll come right away. Good-by."

He hung up the receiver, and ran down to the car. As he took his seat by the side of Maloney, his well-tried and trusted chauffeur, he directed briefly:

"Mr. Matthew Bentham's house in Brooklyn. You know where it is, Danny. And, hurry!"

"Why, chief! What are we going there for?" asked Patsy, from the rear seat of the car. "Aren't we going up through Tarrytown?"

"You are, Patsy. I have something else I must attend to first."

"But, chief——"

"You can find this house where William Jones lives. You know as much about it as I do. Go there and wait for me—unless you get Chick out first."

Patsy didn't like this arrangement. But he knew that when Nick Carter gave a peremptory order it did not admit of argument. So he said no more aloud. To himself he permitted the grumbling observation: "I wonder whether the chief is going dotty."

At the front steps of Professor Matthew Bentham's peaceful-looking brownstone residence near Prospect Park, Brooklyn, Nick Carter paused to look over to Patsy Garvan in the car, and to give him final instructions.

"Find out all you can about the house without being seen. It may be that Chick is not there at all. If he is, he will have found out some way of communicating with the outside, knowing that we would soon trace him. Watch out sharply for that. But don't try to do too much. I can be with you inside of a couple of hours. That's all."

The car moved away, and Nick Carter went inside Matthew Bentham's home without having to knock. The owner of the house had been watching him through the narrow strip of glass at the side of the door, and waiting till he should come up the steps.

CHAPTER II.

THE MAN WHO WROTE THE LETTER.

"I'm glad I was able to find you," were Matthew Bentham's first words, when they were seated in his library. "I did not know whether you would be at home, even as late as this. I have had a peculiar letter. Read it for yourself. Here it is."

He handed to Nick Carter a letter, in typewriting, on the paper of the Supremacy Hotel, New York. It ran as follows:

"DEAR SIR: If you will call on me to-night, about twelve o'clock, I can give you some information that will be valuable to you, in relation to the Y. T. and its leader, S. T. You will remember that a certain packet of papers sent to you by the late A. A. was lost and found through an agency that you know of, although you never have seen S. T. I am as desirous of you to find S. T., and now that I have a clew to his whereabouts, I think we may work in coöperation. If you bring Mr. Nicholas Carter with you, I shall be glad. I know he also is interested in the Y. T. I shall be in the lobby of the Supremacy. They will tell you at the desk where I am. Very truly yours, JAMES SANDERSON."

"Who is James Sanderson?" asked Nick, as he handed back the letter.

"I haven't the slightest idea. But he knows something about the Yellow Tong and Sang Tu. That must be what the initials 'Y. T.' and 'S. T.' stand for."

"It would appear so," murmured Carter thoughtfully. 'And the 'A. A.,' of course, means Andrew Anderton, who was killed by the Yellow Tong with the crossed needles. But I wish I knew who James Sanderson is."

"Will you go to the Hotel Supremacy with me?"

"Certainly. If there is anything that will help us to get our hands on the head of this vile association, I am only too ready. You can see that Sanderson does not trust us, however, or he would not ask us to meet him at a hotel. He would have given us his own address."

"Who do you suppose he is, and how has he found out anything about the Yellow Tong?" said Matthew Bentham, frowning as he tried to comprehend the case. "Is it possible he has belonged to the organization and has quarreled with some of its important men? If so, he may be seeking to betray them."

"Not likely," answered Nick. "From what I have seen of the tong, it holds such terrorism over its people, that none of them would dare to become traitors. Death by the crossed needles is too sudden, as well as true."

"That is true," assented Bentham. "You showed me the needles once. You have them still, have you not?"

"Yes. It was they that killed Anderton. They are so poisonous that, as I have told you, one little scratch is fatal. But there is little use in our conjecturing whether Sanderson is an ex-member of the Yellow Tong or not," said Nick, getting up from his chair and looking toward the door. "The thing is to see him. When we do, we can perhaps judge who and what he is."

"If he should turn out to be a Chinaman, I should feel certain that he has belonged to the organization," declared Bentham, also rising.

"That would be an indication, certainly," agreed the detective. "But not proof—or even *prima-facie* evidence. The Yellow Tong was organized in China, and Sang Tu is a native of Peking, I am told. But there are people of all races sworn to its service. Besides Chinese, its membership includes Japanese, Indians, Spanish, Italians, English, and even Americans. If James Sanderson is a white man, and appears to be a New Yorker, he might none the less be under the orders of this rascal, Sang Tu. Never mind! Let us go. Shall we take a taxi or go over in the subway?"

"There is a taxicab at the door now, I dare say. I telephoned for one as soon as you said you would come. I told him to be here at half past eleven."

The cab was at the door, and soon the two were on their way to the Hotel Supremacy, uptown in Manhattan, where people of all kinds meet for social and business conferences at almost any hour in the twenty-four.

Hardly had they entered the lobby when a young man, in a well-fitting business suit, and with a pleasing, open countenance, who had been lazily puffing at a cigarette near the room clerk's desk, came forward briskly and seized Matthew Bentham's hand.

"Mr. Matthew Bentham?" he chirped, smiling.

"Er—yes," replied Bentham, suffering his hand to be wiggled to and fro without returning the pressure of the other. "But I don't believe I——"

"Ah! Possibly. I am not famous. You are. And this," he went on, holding out his hand to Nick Carter, "is surely Mr. Nicholas Carter, the unparalleled Mr. Carter?"

The detective could not keep his hand away unless he had deliberately refused to let the effusive young man have it. So he permitted it to be shaken, at the same time taking the stranger's hand in a grip that made him utter an involuntary squeak.

"You are an athlete, Mr. Carter," he exclaimed, trying to keep the smile on his face. "My name is Sanderson—James Sanderson."

"Yes?" was Nick's response, dropping the hand. "I supposed so. You wrote to Mr. Bentham, saying you could give some information that you thought he would like. And you mentioned my name, too. I do not remember that we ever met, Mr. Sanderson."

"No. But I have seen Professor Bentham at a lecture, when he spoke of scientific matters in which I am interested. I had plenty of opportunity to study him, because he was on the platform, where it was permissible to stare at him. As you are with him now, I assumed that you were Mr. Carter."

"You wouldn't have known me otherwise?"

"Perhaps not. I had the impression—I don't know how I got it—that you were rather dark, with brown hair. But my impression was wrong, as I see now. The strength of your grip, however, is something that I was prepared for. I was told that you were a powerful man, although you made no display of your strength unnecessarily."

All this rolled from the tongue of James Sanderson easily and naturally. He looked like a young fellow who was delighted at the opportunity to meet one whom he had admired, but never before had seen. There was something extremely ingenuous about Mr. Sanderson.

"Well, can we get down to business?" interrupted Bentham. "There are plenty of quiet corners in the lobby."

The three walked over to a seat in a retired part of the lobby, and Mr. Sanderson, his engaging smile still working, asked Bentham and Carter whether they knew what the initials in his letter meant.

"I think so," replied Nick. "But you may as well tell us right out, now that there is no fear of your being overheard."

"Certainly," was James Sanderson's ready resonse. "I referred to the Yellow Tong. It is a dreadful combination of powerful men, as you know. It happens that I have learned something about it. I am a newspaper reporter, you know."

"Yes? On what paper?"

"I would rather not say, Mr. Carter. I have to be very cautious. The Yellow Tong has spies everywhere, and though I have taken the risk of punishment even by meeting you at all, I do not care to go any further by telling the name of my paper. I will simply say that it is not published in New York."

"A reporter, eh?" remarked Bentham. "Is this an interview for print, then?"

"Not at all," laughed Sanderson. "What object could I have in interviewing you on a subject that cannot be spoken of aloud? If I were to publish an interview on the Y. T., how long would it be before I fell a victim to the crossed needles? No, indeed, this is not an interview for a newspaper. I told you in my letter why I wanted to see you. I only want to help in destroying an organization that threatens not only individuals, but the very nation itself. The government at Washington is threatened by the Y. T., as doubtless you and Mr. Carter both know."

Nick Carter had been scrutinizing the speaker closely without the latter seeming to be aware of it. Penetrating as was the detective where men and their motives were concerned, he had to confess to himself that he could not determine what the object of this James Sanderson really was.

"You have not yet told us what you intend to do in the way of giving us information," Nick reminded him.

"I have hardly had time," protested Sanderson, good humoredly. "But I want to show you that I know a

great deal about Mr. Bentham's connection with the Y. T. hitherto."

"Drive ahead," requested Bentham gruffly. "It is getting late, and I am generally in bed and asleep before this time."

"Well, I hope you are not very tired now, because I did not intend to let you go to bed for some hours yet," was Sanderson's rejoinder. "However, I will drive ahead, as you say."

"I say so, too," put in the detective.

James Sanderson glanced about the lobby, assured himself that no one could hear what he was saying, and began, in rapid, but even, tones:

"A man calling himself Ched Ramar obtained possession of certain records revealing the secrets of the Y. T. He got them by exercising hypnotic power over——"

"Stop!" interposed Nick Carter. "You need not say anything more about that person."

"What person?" asked Bentham, in astonishment. "Is there any reason why I should not hear his name? I never did know who it was took those papers and brought some of them back. It wasn't my Japanese man, Swagara. I know that. There was another person, whose identity I never was able to establish. Unless it would interfere with our getting at the man who guides the work of the Y. T., I should like Mr. Sanderson to tell me who it was."

"I'd rather not, Mr. Bentham," said Sanderson. "Not only because Mr. Carter thinks it would be indiscreet, but because I believe so, too. I am afraid I have said too much already."

"Confound it, man!" spluttered Matthew Bentham. "You haven't said anything yet."

"Well, all I have to say now is that I am prepared to lead you to the presence of one who can tell you more about the Y. T. than you ever have been able to learn heretofore."

"Lead us? Do you mean that we are to go away from this hotel to find the person you name?" inquired Matthew Bentham doubtfully.

"Yes. It is not to be supposed that a man whose very life may depend on his keeping out of sight of those who would destroy him is going to take rooms in a public place like the Hotel Supremacy. We shall have to ride out of the city."

"Which way?" asked Nick Carter casually.

"I will show you. There is a motor car not far away," replied James Sanderson.

They walked together through several dark streets, as if to get a long way from the hotel. But they did not go far, after all. Nick Carter knew his New York too well to be deceived, and he was perfectly aware that they were traveling in an irregular circle. Eventually they stopped in a shadowy spot, where a touring car stood at the curb, lights out and engine stopped. It was unguarded.

"I am my own chauffeur," observed Sanderson. "But I left a friend of mine to watch the machine. Josh!" he called out. "Come here!"

A very tall man, broad in proportion, slouched out of a doorway and stood waiting for orders.

"Get in, Josh!" directed Sanderson briskly. "Mr. Bentham, will you ride with me? Mr. Carter, I'll ask you to get in behind, with Josh. You can call him Josh. He has another name, of course, but we don't generally use it. You understand? Caution is required when one has enemies."

In another minute the passengers were all bestowed, and Sanderson, pressing the electric starting button, sent the big machine purring smoothly on its way. At the same moment he turned on the small lamps.

It had cleared the city, and was running along the road toward Yonkers, the only lights coming from its own head lamps, which Sanderson had not brought into use until after getting out of metropolitan limits, as required by law.

Nick Carter, disguised in his sporting dress, looked nearly as big as the man Josh, and of about the same class, for Josh had "pugilist" written all over him.

Neither of them spoke as they went along. Josh was naturally taciturn, and Nick Carter was busy formulating a plan that he intended to carry into effect at a propitious moment.

The moment came when they were in a very lonely and dark part of the road. At one o'clock in the morning there are not many persons moving along country roads, even close to New York City.

Without the slightest warning, either by word or movement, Nick Carter suddenly sprang upon Josh, seized him by the neck with his left hand, and pressed the muzzle of his automatic to the surprised man's forehead with the other!

CHAPTER III.

NICK IS SUSPICIOUS.

"Say one word, and I'll shoot you through the head!" hissed the detective, his lips close to Josh's ear.

Josh was a thick-headed sort of man—it had been said that his head never had been injured by the hardest blow from a fist, and that an ax handle would not make an impression—and it was hard for him to comprehend what this sudden assault meant.

One thing was clear to him, however. That was the pistol. He knew something about guns, and he had no doubt that the determined man leaning over him, with a knee pressed on his stomach, would pull the trigger if he considered it necessary.

The detective had made his attack in perfect silence. Even if he had made a noise, it would have been drowned in the purring of the motor and the crunching of the dust of the road. No matter how softly a large motor car may travel, it cannot go without some sound.

Matthew Bentham sat quietly by the side of James Sanderson, who was driving skillfully and with his eyes straight in front. It is seldom that a chauffeur knows anything of what is going on behind him, unless there is a very loud disturbance.

"What are you going to do?" whispered Josh.

Nick Carter's only reply was to push the muzzle harder against the inquirer's forehead, as a hint to him to keep quiet.

As a matter of fact, the detective was not quite certain how to proceed. He wanted to secure this big man in some way, but had nothing to do it with except a pair of handcuffs in his pocket. He seldom went anywhere without them. They were small and light, but of unbreakably strong steel.

For a moment he debated on the expediency of opening the door of the car and throwing his companion out.

But he decided at once that that would not do. Josh would raise an alarm, perhaps, and the next thing would be some policeman along the road arresting him for assault, and perhaps for trying to steal the car.

Nick Carter was known to nearly all the metropolitan police, but there were others outside who did not know him except by name, and it might be hard to convince them of his identity, especially in the disguise he wore.

As a preliminary, however, Nick took his left hand from his prisoner's throat, pressing the pistol a little harder, to remind him that an attempt to escape would be dangerous. Then he drew out his handcuffs and slipped them on with professional dexterity.

"Keep quite still, Josh!" he whispered. "You are caught, and you can't get away. If you try to give any tip to your pal in front, I'll kill you, and get him afterward. You needn't suppose I will not do what I say."

"Oh, I know you'll do it," growled Josh, deep in his throat. "If I'd knowed it was you I had to travel with, I wouldn't ha' done it. I thought it was just some ordinary guy that was to be slugged and rolled for his wallet. I didn't git no word it was Nick Carter. If I had, you can bet I wouldn't be here."

All this came in a husky whisper that Nick could hear only by listening close. Not a syllable of it reached either of the men in the front seat.

So quietly had the little episode behind them been transacted that they had no suspicion. Both supposed that Josh and the detective were wrapped in their own meditations, waiting to get to their destination, wherever it might be. They had not been talking, of course, or their voices would have come to the front seat.

"Unbuckle your belt!" ordered Nick softly. "And don't take your hands away from the front of it, or——"

The muzzle of the automatic finished the sentence, by significantly digging a little farther into the flesh of Josh's forehead. Nick Carter smiled grimly, as he thought of the red ring there would be there when the pistol was taken away.

Josh did as he was told. The belt he wore was an exceptionally thick and strong one, as the detective had noted, and it would be just the thing to fasten its wearer's legs together. Josh was extremely careful not to move his fingers away from the buckle as he loosened it.

Nick twisted the belt twice around Josh's ankles—always keeping the pistol pointed at his head—and buckled it tightly behind. Then he looked at his work with satisfaction.

"Just one thing more!" he muttered.

He had seen that Josh had a large yellow-and-white silk handkerchief in the outside pocket of his sack coat. When this was spread out, it would twist into a long rope, and one that would not yield easily.

"I'm sorry to have to do this, Josh!" apologized Nick. "But I cannot take any chances on your talking too much. Turn around, with your back to me. You needn't stand up. Just slew around on the seat."

Josh obeyed, and instantly the silk handkerchief was around his face, covering his mouth, and tightly tied at the back.

"That will do," remarked Nick, in a low tone of intense satisfaction. "If I could only let Bentham know what I've done, he'd be ready to help when I need him."

But there was little opportunity of giving a hint to Bentham. Besides, although Bentham was a bright man and one of the famous scientists of New York, he lacked the poise essential to good detective work. He was quite likely to utter a startled exclamation if he saw that Josh was sitting back there, handcuffed and gagged. That would warn James Sanderson, and there would be a lot of trouble that might otherwise be avoided.

So Nick Carter argued, and he made up his mind to wait and let things take their course.

For an hour the car rolled on. Nick saw that it had left the road parallel with the river, and had turned off into the hills at the back. He wondered whether he was going to find Chick where they were going.

"Even if I do, I wonder what about Patsy. He won't know where I am—unless it should turn out that we are going to that house up by Tarrytown. I don't believe we are. I have an idea that was all a blind."

He gave credit for extreme cunning to everybody connected with the Yellow Tong. It was because he was so suspicious of any person who knew anything about this terrible organization that he had come to the conclusion that James Sanderson was not what he said he was—an innocent newspaper reporter who would like to see Sang Tu and his followers brought to justice.

It was about half past two, in a spot that was absolutely black save for the white glow from the car's headlights, when they turned down a narrow lane, and, without stopping, entered a large barn.

Nick Carter waited until Sanderson had switched off the engine. Then he leaned over the seat and pressed the muzzle of his automatic to the astonished young man's temple.

"It's all up, Sanderson—if that's your name," said Nick calmly. "I've got your pal gagged and handcuffed, and you can't do anything."

James Sanderson was wise enough to know when the game had gone against him. What was more, he never forgot to bluff. So he only laughed with the good humor he had displayed at the hotel, and turned a pair of honest-looking dark eyes on the detective.

The light from the headlights was reflected from the wall of the barn, and enabled Nick to see his new prisoner's face quite distinctly. He rather admired the self-possession of this young man.

"I don't know what this means, Mr. Carter. I suppose you think I'm not on the level."

"I know you are in collusion with the people we are trying to find," replied Nick coolly.

"You mean the Y. T.?"

"Yes."

"Well, you are wrong."

"I don't think so."

"Suppose I prove it?"

"Then I'll believe you."

"All right! Let me get out of this car and I'll show you. I'll take you straight to the place where you can see S. T. and some of his men. Then you'll have to confess that I've been honest with you. I'll get out of the car right now and show you."

He actually made a move as if he would step out, motioning Matthew Bentham to get out of his way.

"I don't think we'll do it that way," laughed Nick Carter. "You're a very agreeable young man. But I feel safer when I've got you under my hand. Mr. Ben-

tham, that gentleman in the back seat is becoming restive. Just throw your gun on him."

Bentham got out of the front of the car, and, stepping along the running board, went in behind, his automatic pointed at Josh's head. An incoherent grunt came from the big man. Then he subsided, as if he had made up his mind that there was no hope.

"I tell you that the Y. T. is here," insisted Sanderson.

"That may be. But I do not intend to let you tell them that I have come. I am going to see them, nevertheless. You are going to give me a chance to look at them without their knowing I am about."

"I don't see how."

"That is for you to find out," returned Nick. "Mr. Bentham, I think you can leave that man in the back seat alone for a few moments. Go around this barn and get me some rope. I see several tie ropes hanging on the wall, with the harness. If you can't find enough rope, I'll have to use leather. But I prefer hemp, if I can get it."

It did not take long to get as much rope as Nick required. With it he fastened James Sanderson's hands behind him, also binding his arms to his sides. This made him helpless, although he was able to walk.

Nick stepped to the door of the barn, after turning out the head lamps of the car, and looked to the right, where he had noted the dark shape of a house.

As he stared, he made out a chink of light from an upper window. It was not more than a sliver of white, but it told him that there was a light there, with shutters at the windows.

"We'll have to put Josh somewhere that he'll be safe," muttered the detective, looking about the barn in the gloom. "Is that a harness cupboard over there?" he asked of Sanderson.

"My dear sir," laughed the young man gayly. "I don't know much about this farm. I've only been here once before. You can look for yourself."

It was a harness cupboard—rather a large one—and it had a strong bolt on the outside of the door.

Josh was placed in the cupboard and the door secured. Then Nick Carter took Sanderson by the elbow and led him out to the dark yard, keeping his automatic pressed against the young man's temple. On the other side of Sanderson walked Matthew Bentham.

"Put the muzzle of your pistol against the side of his forehead, professor!" requested Nick quietly. "Don't be afraid to shoot if there should be a disturbance. We may be walking into an ambush, for anything I know."

"You are not," interposed James Sanderson. "You are simply doing a very foolish thing, giving the worst of it to a man who is your friend. I'll show you that soon."

All this had no effect on the detective. He did not know what connection Sanderson had with the Yellow Tong, but he had seen enough to convince him that the letter was intended as a decoy, and that Sanderson had some sinister object in bringing him and Bentham to this out-of-the-way place.

They walked through the darkness till they got to the back door of what looked like an ordinary frame farmhouse. The door was locked.

"Open that door!" commanded Nick shortly.

"How can I?" protested Sanderson. "You don't suppose I have a key to this place, do you? Why, I'm almost as much a stranger here as you are. I——"

"Open that door," repeated the detective, pushing the pistol harder against his prisoner's head. "If you don't, I'll take the key from your pocket and do it myself. The more trouble you give me, the worse it will be for you."

James Sanderson indulged himself with a low chuckle.

"Upon my word, for a man as smart as you are reputed to be, you certainly ask the most impossible things. Have you forgotten that my hands are tied behind me? How am I to take a key from my pocket—even if I had such a key?"

"I'd forgotten that," admitted the detective, "and, being in the dark, I could not see how I'd fixed you. Where is the key?"

"In my waistcoat pocket—on the side next to you."

James Sanderson had made up his mind that there was nothing to be gained by further denial. The key was where he had said. Directly afterward Nick Carter unlocked the door, and the three entered what seemed to be an empty building.

A peculiar smell—the odor of burning opium—reached the detective's nostrils. Faint though it was, he distinguished it, and he felt sure he was on the eve of discovering more about the inner workings of the Yellow Tong than he ever had before.

CHAPTER IV.

THE YELLOW SCRIM.

When they entered the house first they were in a sort of summer kitchen, communicating with the regular kitchen used when the weather was too cold for the other. In neither room was there a sign of life.

Nick Carter turned the light of his pocket flash lamp upon the room, and he saw that the furniture was of the ordinary kind in such a home. There was a large cooking range, a long table, a cupboard with glass doors, showing cups and saucers, plates and dishes, et cetera, and a few chairs. On the floor was a rag carpet.

Nothing in the place suggested the presence of a terrible organization that, like the Yellow Tong, made a practice of ruthless murder when it suited its purpose. There never was a more innocent-appearing farm kitchen anywhere.

Still keeping his flash going, Nick told Bentham to open a door at the other end, and, after going through a short hall, they turned sharply to the left. Here there was a much larger hall, with a flight of stairs, protected by a handsome balustrade, to the upper story.

On the thick carpet their footfalls made no sound. The stairs were wide enough for them to walk three abreast, and there was not a moment when the two pistols were not pressed against John Sanderson's temples.

He might have shouted and given warning to his pals—if he had any in the house—but at the same instant two bullets would have entered his brain. He was quite aware of this, and he maintained a discreet silence, whatever may have been in his mind.

The second floor was carefully inspected. There were four bedrooms, and in each chamber was a bed, neatly made. Into each of these rooms did the trio march, and always Nick Carter and Matthew Bentham were pre-

pared to kill their prisoner if any sign of treachery should be manifested.

"I don't know whether anybody is sleeping here or not," Sanderson protested, when Nick Carter questioned him before they entered the first one. "This is a farmhouse, and I believe the hired help sleep in the house. That is all I can tell you."

The detective did not believe him. He and Bentham were both prepared for battle, and the chances would have been poor for Sanderson if hostilities had broken out.

After examining every bedroom, and sundry clothes closets that were on this floor, the three went up another flight of stairs, narrower than the lower one, to the third story. Here they found only two rooms, and they could not penetrate beyond the first. It was rather small, and seemed to be intended for a bedroom, for there was a cot bed at one side, and a table, with a small mirror on the wall above it.

"What is in that other room?" demanded the detective of Sanderson, in a whisper. "It takes up all the floor except for this small chamber."

"I don't know."

There was no smile on James Sanderson's face now. For the first time he seemed to feel that the situation was serious. He shrugged his shoulders as he answered, and waited, with outward calmness, for what was to follow.

"Take my gun, Bentham. Stand behind this young man, with both pistols at his head. If he makes any kind of move, shoot. It will raise an alarm, but I don't care for that. We shall have to make known our presence here at last, or I am much mistaken."

He stepped lightly to the other end of the little room, where a small door, seemingly belonging to a cupboard, had caught his eye.

It was a cupboard, and when Nick had gone inside and thrown the light of his flash about it, he saw that there was another door, hidden by an old coat and overalls, hung with seeming carelessness in front of it.

In the middle of the door was a round hole, about two inches in diameter, blinded by a shutter of wood or metal on the other side. It was the kind of spy hole often seen in the door of a lodge room of a secret society.

Putting his ear close to the door, Nick could hear a low murmur, as if a man with a very deep voice were speaking.

"If I could only see something of what they are doing!" muttered Nick. "That infernal peephole is stopped up. Wouldn't it be possible for me to get a glimpse through it in some way?"

He thought for a few moments. Then he hit on a plan that, by its very boldness, might succeed. He went back to where Bentham stood, two pistols in his hands, guarding Sanderson. The latter had got over his seriousness, and now pretended to be rather bored than anything else.

"Sanderson, you say you are honest in this matter?" whispered Nick Carter. "You deny that you are in with the Y. T., as you call it?"

"My dear Mr. Carter, if you were not so suspicious, you would have believed me from the first. What do you want me to do now?"

"I want you to speak to the man who guards that peephole over there, and induce him to let you look through at the proceedings within. They know your voice, don't they?"

"Yes," replied Sanderson eagerly.

He stopped short. He saw that he had betrayed himself, and he looked anxiously at Carter, to see what effect his quick confession had had upon him. There was no emotion to be seen in the detective's face. Apparently he had not thought it remarkable that a reporter who had been trying to learn something about the secrets of the Yellow Tong as an outsider should be so well known to its members that they would recognize his voice.

"Can you make them open the peephole?"

"Not very well. But I can take you somewhere so that you can see all that goes on—provided you are willing to take some risk. It will be death if you are discovered."

"Lead us to the place."

"It will be death not only for you, but for me," protested Sanderson, hesitating.

"Don't talk. Go on!"

"It is not through this room," said Sanderson. "This narrow hall outside will take us to the place I mean."

Nick Carter placed a hand on the young man's shoulder to stop him, and whispered sternly in his ear:

"Don't forget that we both have pistols pointed at your head. At the first sign of treachery, you die, regardless of what may happen to us afterward."

"I know all that," broke in the young man impatiently. "You need not be always telling me. Just keep along and say nothing. Silence is demanded here—from everybody except one. Who he is you will soon see."

James Sanderson was an enigma to Nick Carter, as well as to Matthew Bentham. While his actions had led Nick to feel sure he was a member of the Yellow Tong, his open manner and frank face suggested entire innocence.

"If I did not know that some of the cleverest spies are blessed with countenances which no one would doubt, I might believe that I have misjudged this young fellow, after all," thought Nick. "As it is, I will wait and see and be cautious."

Through a long, narrow hall Sanderson led his two companions, until they came to a heavy curtain of dark-colored velvet. It was parted in the middle, and the young man butted his way through it. He had no other way of opening the curtains, with hands tied behind him, so he used his head.

They found themselves in a small chamber, in which were a number of yellow satin cushions piled up or scattered about without order.

"The anteroom for the Golden One," whispered Sanderson.

"What's the 'Golden One'?" asked Bentham. "I never heard of that before."

"It is the title given to him who rules the Yellow Tong," replied Sanderson, in a scarcely audible whisper. "There is one at every conclave hall of the tong. It is used by the Golden One to gain the great hall."

"Are there other conclave halls, besides this?"

"Many. The Yellow Tong is far-reaching."

The slight suggestion of boastfulness in James Sanderson's tones now did not escape Nick Carter. He thought it sounded as if the young man were proud of the greatness of an organization to which he belonged.

It was in figuring out motives and actions from such

subtleties that the famous detective excelled. To those who did not understand his delicate methods, his success often seemed nothing less than supernatural.

"Are you ready for the light?" whispered Sanderson, still bumptiously.

"Yes. Where is it?" asked Nick.

"Here!"

The young man nodded with his head to another pair of curtains, but they were of a bright yellow, and seemed to be of the finest satin, with silk edging.

"What are we to do?" asked the detective.

"You may part those curtains and go in. Turn to the right. There you will find a door. Knock, but stand back so that the person within will not see you. I will show only my face."

All this was very mysterious, and Nick could not get rid of the feeling that it might end in some act of violence by an unseen foe which might be fatal to him and his companion. But they had gone too far now to draw back—even if Carter had had any such idea—and he boldly knocked with his knuckles at the door.

At the same moment James Sanderson thrust his face forward, and at once was lighted up by a sort of yellow glare that came through a square hole like a small casement. The hole was covered with yellow scrim, but it did not interfere with a clear view of what was within.

Nick Carter took one glance. Then he drew in his breath, as he sought to get a good grip on himself, and muttered to himself the two words: "At last!"

CHAPTER V.

THE SENTENCE ON CHICK.

A hideous Chinese face came close to the scrim and muttered a word in Chinese, with the peculiar singsong inflection of the Mongolian tongue.

James Sanderson replied with a similar word, and Nick Carter could not but remark how nearly the accent of this white man resembled that of the native-born Chinaman.

No sooner had the passwords been exchanged than the face disappeared from the other side of the scrim, and Sanderson nodded to Nick Carter to come nearer.

As the detective obeyed, he understood that, standing in darkness, as he was, it was impossible for anybody in the room on the other side of the scrim to see through it, while he, on the other hand, had a clear view of all that was done in the lighted hall beyond.

For it was rather a hall than a mere room. It was hung with yellow satin all around its walls, and the lamp which depended from the roof in the middle, and had eight or ten burners, was shrouded in yellow cloth, so that the light came through only in that hue.

There were five men in the room—all in Chinese robes of great richness, with the yellow dragon of China worked into each one in brocaded silk. The men were all, except one, masked with yellow cloth that hung below their chins, with two eyeholes.

The one exception was a Chinaman in ordinary coolie dress of blue cotton, who seemed to be a servant. It was he who had opened the casement and exchanged the password with James Sanderson. His face was uncovered. He sat in a corner, as if ready to obey any command that might be flung to him.

Of the other four, one sat on a pile of yellow cushions at the end of the hall, with a sort of scepter in his hand. The other three were at some distance from him, each on yellow cushions, but not so many as were under the personage at the head of the hall.

There was perfect silence when Nick Carter peeped in, and it was maintained as the detective looked inquiringly at Sanderson.

"The Golden One presides," whispered Sanderson. "There is important business coming on. Will you not untie my arms? I have done what I promised—brought you into the presence of the Y. T. and the Golden One."

"The Golden One is Sang Tu?" said Nick Carter interrogatively.

"I must not say," was all James Sanderson would reply.

"I shall not untie you until I see further what is done here. Then I will take you out. It looks to me as if this really is the fountainhead of the Yellow Tong. But I am not yet satisfied with your part in it all. You know rather too much to be honest, I'm afraid. Bentham, watch him closely. I want to give my attention to what is going on inside."

Of course, all this talk had been in whispers, but Nick would not have been surprised if Sanderson had suddenly shouted. He did not trust the young man, and he was in momentary expectation of some outbreak from him which would prove the justice of his mistrust.

It was evident to Nick Carter that the Golden One had just made some pronouncement which the three subordinates were silently considering.

There was an interruption to this mute reflection when the Chinaman who acted as a servant abruptly passed out of a door at the other end of the hall which was concealed by the yellow hangings, and as quickly returned.

He moved around the wall, behind the two men who sat on their yellow cushions on that side, and prostrated himself before the man he had called "Golden One."

"What is it?" asked the great man, in Chinese, his voice sounding strangely muffled behind the cloth that covered his countenance, and his eyes flashing through the two sight holes. "Why am I disturbed. Speak! Or suffer the punishment you deserve."

Nick Carter could not help turning up his nose slightly at this high-flown language. But Sanderson looked very serious, while the Chinaman who was kneeling before the Golden One, with his forehead on the floor, trembled violently as he replied, in quavering tones:

"Your unworthy servant craves your pardon, excellency. I have important news to lay at your august feet."

Nick Carter had a good knowledge of the Chinese tongue, and he understood what was passing as well as if it had been in English. He listened eagerly to hear what was coming. It might concern Chick—or even Patsy.

"If this news is not important, it will be sad for you, slave," croaked the Golden One.

"But it is important. Your servant knows, and it shall be on his head if it fails to interest your excellency."

"Well, well! We will judge!" interrupted the big man impatiently. "What is it? Speak!"

"The man who was brought in the motor car, and who was to have been taken to another temple of the great

Yellow Tong, oh, Golden One! is here, to be used at your bidding."

Nick Carter found it hard to restrain himself from dashing away the scrim at the casement and forcing his way into the yellow-hung hall when he heard this.

They had Chick here, then? What next would happen? Surely, with the aid of Matthew Bentham and Chick himself, it ought to be possible to overcome these four or five wretches, especially if they could be taken by surprise.

"Bring him in!"

The hollow voice having commanded this, there was silence for a few minutes, while the Chinaman was away to do the bidding of the Golden One.

Nick Carter turned to make sure his prisoner was secure. He saw that Matthew Bentham held the pistol close to the ear of Sanderson, and that the latter was standing quite still, looking over Nick's shoulder through the scrim-covered casement. Satisfied that all was safe, he resumed his watching of the proceedings inside.

Of one thing he was quite certain—if any harm were threatened to Chick, he—Nick Carter—would plunge into the room, regardless of consequences. There would be a sharp fight, no doubt. But he believed his assistant and himself, with the help of Matthew Bentham, could account for all of the Yellow Tong who would oppose them.

Soon there was a shuffling of feet at the other end of the hall, and the Chinaman returned, with a man in the dress of a chauffeur, but with a yellow cloth over his face, like that worn by the men on the cushions. Between them they carried the unconscious form of Chick!

What had been done to him to take away his assistant's senses Nick Carter did not know. But it was not difficult to surmise. With their command of powerful and little-understood drugs, it was not difficult for these people to put any one into a false sleep—or to kill, if desired.

Nick saw that Chick was not dead, although utterly oblivious to all that was passing around him.

The Golden One peered through his eyeholes at the still face of Chick, as he was laid on cushions immediately in front of the dais where the chief conspirator sat. The eyes at the back of the mask flashed like those of a maddened tiger.

"So!" he exclaimed, in English, in the hollow tones which seemed to belong to him. "This is the interfering dog who works with the man I have sworn to kill, Nicholas Carter! He would try to penetrate the secrets of the sacred brotherhood, would he? Well, he shall learn one of them—but only just before he dies. It shan't be of any use to him in this world."

Nick Carter again glanced over his shoulder at Sanderson. He felt that a crisis was approaching, and he was rather puzzled what disposition to make of this young man who had brought him here.

"All I can do is to depend on his being well bound," he thought. "We have to rescue Chick, at all hazards."

Bentham had been staring as hard as his companions at the strange scene enacted in the big, yellow-hung room. But he was not the man to make suggestions in such a crisis as this. He was depending entirely on the resourceful detective.

"Call Ying Lee!" ordered the Golden One, after a moment's pause, during which he seemed to be gloating over the helplessness of his captive. "Tell him to come quickly."

His Chinese menial hastened away, and returned almost immediately with a dignified-looking Chinaman, better dressed than the servant, and with his face unmasked. He wore spectacles, and his eyes had a calm and thoughtful expression which betokened the student.

This was Ying Lee, and he was body and soul at the command of the man they called the Golden One. Having made the usual obeisance, he waited for a command from his master.

"Look down and tell me what you see at your side," came the hollow injunction from behind the yellow cloth. "Do you know who this is—this man who has been brought to the temple?"

Ying Lee bent a careful gaze upon Chick, adjusting his spectacles so that he might be sure of what he saw. Then he turned to the Golden One and nodded gravely.

"It is the same, oh, Golden One! It is the helper of the pestilent Nicholas Carter."

Nick smiled gently. It was always music to his ears to be villified by people of this kind. He thought Ying Lee was rather moderate in calling him only "pestilent."

"What shall we do with him, Ying Lee?"

The question carried with it enough vindictiveness to have guided the answer, even if such guidance was required.

"He must not get away again, excellency," was Ying Lee's murmured reply.

"That is true. But we must be careful. This Nicholas Carter has great power and many friends. We cannot afford to put the Yellow Tong in danger just to gratify our just revenge. You must always keep that in mind, Ying Lee."

"I do keep it in mind, excellency," declared Ying Lee. "But we can end this viper's mischief without suspicion ever falling upon any one here."

"I am not afraid of that," rejoined the hollow voice. "We shall leave this place to-morrow morning. Then the farmer we borrowed it of will resume his work, as usual, and nobody will know we ever have been here. He has not seen any of the tong. The young American who is our outside agent can prove that he is a reporter on a newspaper, and that his business takes him everywhere. If he chose to pay the farmer a sum of money to occupy this farm a few days, that is an ordinary transaction, which would not excite suspicion. He can explain that he wrote a special story for his paper, and the photographs he has taken will bear out his words."

"Let me see those photos," whispered Nick Carter to James Sanderson. "Are they in your pocket?"

"I don't know what you mean," said Sanderson.

But Nick Carter was quite certain that he did know, even if he had not shown nervousness in his twitching face.

"I have an idea, oh, Golden One!" announced Ying Lee, after a pause. "It will help us, I think."

"Speak!"

"The three members of the Yellow Tong who failed to carry out the decree against Nicholas Carter, and who suffered under the crossed needles, have not yet been sent back to China for burial?"

"No."

"They are still in their caskets?"

"Yes. In a safe place. What are you thinking about? I don't understand."

"Why not put this viper before us into a box and send him to China with the others?"

"Alive?"

Ying Lee stood up and looked straight at the eye holes, through which glared the blazing eyes of the Golden One. Then he smiled.

"The crossed needles tell no tales, and they make it easy to carry a man anywhere. I would send him to China after he had been stroked by the needles. We do not want the risk of his being found here when he has paid the penalty. Is not that well, excellency?"

"You're right, Ying Lee. We will not take risks."

He made a sweeping motion with his two hands, and got to his feet.

It was then that Nick Carter had an opportunity to see how tall the Golden One was, and to note his immense proportions generally.

"It is Sang Tu," murmured Nick softly. "I was pretty certain. Now I am quite sure. Bentham, is your gun ready?" he asked, turning to his companion.

"Yes. What is it?"

"Nothing. Don't follow me unless you think I can't handle the situation by myself. But I think I can."

When the three men with covered faces were on their feet, and the Chinaman who acted as general servant had taken his stand at the back of the hall, his hands crossed on his breast, Ying Lee brought from the folds of his robe a small box that appeared to be of gold.

"Oh, Golden One!" he chanted. "Behold that your commands are fulfilled by your servant."

He opened the box, and Nick Carter saw that, within it, were the fatal crossed needles—the glittering implement whose poisonous touch meant death on the instant.

Regardless of everything but the peril of his beloved assistant, Nick Carter rushed around to the curtains which closed the opening behind Sang Tu, and darted between them into the assembly hall!

As he did so, Ying Lee, with a hiss of rage, hurled the crossed needles full at his face!

CHAPTER VI.

NICK LIES LOW.

If ever Nick Carter was in hideous peril, it was at that moment. And, what made it worse, was that he could not defend himself in any ordinary way.

The very nature of the poisonous crossed needles made them proof against direct attack. They had not to sink in and make a deep wound to accomplish their purpose. A scratch would be sufficient, and such a scratch might easily be received by anybody seeking to keep them off his face by raising an arm.

Strangely enough, it was an enemy who saved him, although he did not do it intentionally.

James Sanderson had not been idle while the detective was absorbed in the fate of Chick. Matthew Bentham was an able scientist and a deep student, but he was not fully alive to the wiles of every-day rascality. He had seen that Sanderson was tied up with ropes and that his hands were fastened behind his back.

It did not seem possible that the young man could do any harm while in that condition. So Bentham was not paying any particular attention to him. When things became warmer in the yellow-hung temple, he did not look at Sanderson at all.

So it was James Sanderson, free of his bonds, who banged his way through a door that he knew of, but which had not been found by Nick, and aimed a blow at the detective with his fist.

He did not reach Nick Carter's jaw, as he intended. But he did smash his fist into his chest. The result was that Nick staggered back under the unexpected assault, and—Sanderson's arm was struck by the hurled crossed needles!

Without even a groan, the young man fell flat upon the floor. The crossed needles were no respecters of persons. Friends or enemies were alike to them.

It is not likely that the death of James Sanderson made any difference in what followed. Sang Tu—to give him his real name—had recognized Nick Carter on the instant, and it filled his soul with fury.

Three times had he sent emissaries to take the life of this seemingly invincible foe of crime, and three times had they been beaten.

That was why there were three coffins, each containing a Chinaman who had come to his death by the golden needles, waiting to be dispatched to China, so that their occupants might lie in the soil of their native land.

As the crossed needles were thrown by Ying Lee, and, missing Nick Carter, did to death, like a stroke of lightning, this James Sanderson, the "outside agent" of the Yellow Tong, Sang Tu clapped his hands.

There was an immediate response to the signal, in the coming in of four men in ordinary farm laborers' clothes, and each with his face covered with a yellow mask. They looked at Sang Tu, and, at a nod from him, sprang together upon Nick Carter.

But the detective was not taken yet. If he had not had Chick to take care of, he never would have been captured, either, for he could have made his escape easily while these rather clumsy assailants of his were trying to get past his guard and seize him.

As it was, he sent them tumbling back—one, two, three!—as he shot out his hard and skillfully propelled fists one after the other, like the steady and rhythmical strokes of an engine piston.

It was a busy time for him, but he did not mind that. What distressed him was that Chick still lay inert on the yellow cushions at Sang Tu's feet.

It was not only the four farm laborers with whom Nick had to deal. The three men who had sat in council with Sang Tu, but who had not spoken since the detective had seen them, came striding forward now and hurled themselves upon him.

This made seven at him at once, and, brave and active as he was, the detective had to yield at last. They bore him to the floor, and one of them carefully picked up the crossed needles from Sanderson's sleeve and held it over Nick Carter's face.

In spite of himself, a shudder ran through his frame. If the needles had slipped from the fingers of the fiend who waved them tauntingly only a few inches above his eyes, he knew that that would mean his death.

But this torment was of very short duration. Sang Tu waved his hand at the fellow, and, in Chinese, commanded him to return the crossed needles to Ying Lee.

"Now," went on Sang Tu, when this order had been obeyed, and Ying Lee had shut the needles in their golden box, "make this new prisoner like the other."

Nick Carter knew this meant applying an anæsthetic, and he fought hard against the touch of another needle that Ying Lee brought forth from his robe, and with which at last he managed to touch Nick Carter's wrist. It was a drug of great power, but not deadly. The Chinese have the secret of many such drugs, and they keep them secret.

It happened that, when the needle came in contact with Nick Carter's wrist, it was not the point that touched the skin, but the side. Ying Lee, having great difficulty in getting the needle there at all—for the detective never ceased his battle—did not see exactly what he had done. Nick was quick to see this, and his mind working rapidly, as it always did—especially in an emergency—he fell back as if he was entirely unconscious.

It was fortunate for himself that he had make-up on. In assuming the character of the sport, which he had maintained all this night and morning, he had painted his face thickly with rouge. Now that he was supposed to have lost his senses, it could not be seen whether he turned pale or not under the red color.

It is not to be supposed that so astute an observer as Sang Tu would not detect the disguise at first glance. He knew immediately that it was not Nick Carter's complexion at which he was looking, just as he recognized his loud clothing as a rig that the detective, with his regard for good taste, would never think of wearing except for professional reasons.

"He is gone, Ying Lee," he said. "You may all remove your face coverings. The council is over and there are no strangers here."

He set the example, by taking off the yellow cloth that hung down over his face, and Nick, through his nearly closed eyes, took a steady look at the strong face of the man his followers called the Golden One.

It was a face which would not soon be forgotten when once seen. Indomitable resolve, cruel resolution, relentlessness, and bounding ambition, were all there—and over all the inscrutable mysticism of the Orient, like a gray veil, making his real nature ever a riddle that no man could read.

When the four laborers uncovered their faces, it could be seen that they had Mongolian features, but all had cut off their cues, and, in their Caucasian dress, might have passed for Americans at a casual glance.

The others were Chinamen, and all of them were obviously of the educated class. They gathered around the two prisoners and the dead body of Sanderson, with thoughtful faces.

"I am sorry our outside agent is dead," remarked Sang Tu, in English, and without emotion. "He was useful. We had not had him long, but already he had shown an aptitude for the work, and would have become an important member of the tong in the course of time. He had lived in China for five years, and he spoke our tongue well."

Nick Carter absorbed this information with the remainder that came his way. It did not matter much about Sanderson, now that he was gone. But the detective was pleased to find out that he had not misjudged him.

"It is daylight," remarked Ying Lee, pointing to a skylight, where the gray dawn showed through the glass.

"What are we to do? Shall we go to the other place now, or wait till night?"

"We must wait for darkness again," replied Sang Tu. "I did not think we should be so long with this council. But the coming of these two prisoners is something that well makes up for the time we have lost. I want to get back to our New York headquarters as soon as we can. We must get those papers from the man Bentham. We know where they are now."

"If Ched Ramar had not failed us, we should have them now," remarked Ying Lee.

"True. But Ched Ramar paid for his failure with his life. It was as well, because I should have sent to him the crossed needles if he had not died. He had failed in his mission, and the Yellow Tong never forgives failure."

"I wonder whether he would forgive his own failure," thought Nick.

It was difficult for the detective to lie there, feigning unconsciousness and listening to the boasts of Sang Tu. More than once he had to argue with himself to refrain from jumping up, shooting Sang Tu dead, and tackling all the others single-handed.

"What shall we do with these two?" asked one of the men in laborer's clothes, pointing to Chick and Nick Carter.

"Let them lie there," was the order. "They will not wake up for ten or twelve hours, will they, Ying Lee?"

"This one will remain asleep for much longer than that," was the answer as he touched Nick Carter with his foot.

"Well, I know the other one is safe," remarked one of the three, who had been in the council, masked. "I saw to that, at the other place, where we took him."

"Then that will do for the present. We will sleep now for a few hours. There is plenty of room for the council on the floor below. The others may go to the barn, except Ying Lee, who has a bedroom on the ground floor."

The remains of James Sanderson had already been taken away, and it rather startled Nick when the others all went out of the hall, after turning out the lamps in the center and allowing the rapidly increasing daylight to have full sway.

"I wonder where Bentham is?" was Nick's puzzled thought, after he had lain still for a few minutes after being left alone, with Chick. "I don't think they can have got him, or I should have heard something about it. Well, I'll have to bring Chick to his senses for the first thing. These drugs of theirs are powerful. But I am glad I studied medicine in my younger days. It will be strange to me if I have not something in my pocket case that will fit poor Chick's case."

As it happened, he did not have to depend on his pocket case, for just as he was feeling in a secret pocket, where he kept his most precious possessions when out—and which he had had put into all his disguises, as well as his regular wardrobe—Chick heaved a long, deep-drawn sigh.

In a flash Nick was leaning over, looking eagerly at him, as slowly he threw off the thrall of the drug which had been expected to keep him in unconsciousness for many more hours.

"Thank Heaven!" was Nick Carter's fervent exclamation below his breath.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MAN BEHIND THE CURTAINS.

It was nearly broad daylight by the time Chick had recovered sufficiently to recognize his chief, and to wonder where they both were.

"Hush, Chick!" were Nick Carter's first words. "Don't speak. We are in a tight place, and I don't know who may be listening."

Chick nodded his understanding of the situation, but he could not keep quiet altogether. He had to speak, although he was careful to tame his voice to a scarcely audible whisper, as he pulled Nick's head down to enable him to put his lips to his chief's ear.

"I remember all about it now. I was grabbed up and shoved into an automobile. I lost my senses almost at once. One of the men squirted some liquid down my throat and up my nose, and that was the end of it. I did not know anything till I found myself lying here."

"Can you stand?" asked Nick anxiously.

"Yes. I don't think I'm hurt in any way. A little stiff, perhaps. But I'll soon get over that. Where are all those chinks?"

"Gone to bed, I hope. They said they were going to, at all events. What we have to do is to lie here, perfectly still, for at least half an hour. I wouldn't trust any of those fellows as far as I could see them. They are likely to be watching us at any moment. In fact ——"

He did not finish the sentence. He had caught sight of a slinking figure behind the yellow curtains over on one side. In an instant he knew that some spy had caught the two supposed unconscious prisoners talking to each other, and, of course, he had gone to inform Sang Tu.

Nick had the fellow by the throat before he could put up his hands in defense. It was one of the Chinese farm laborers. He was a big, husky man, and it struck Nick that his muscles might actually have been toughened by farm work. On the other hand, there was so little activity in him that the detective soon brought him to the floor.

"Come on, Chick! Help me hold him, if you can."

Chick had truly said that he was a little stiff. But he managed to hobble across the floor, becoming looser each instant. He knelt on the prisoner and incidentally pressed one of the big, yellow cushions on his face.

"What are we going to do with him, chief? Is there any rope about that we can tie him with? I haven't any handcuffs. Have you?"

"No," replied Nick Carter. "Mine are decorating the wrists of a gentleman I had occasion to shut up in a cupboard in the barn. But we don't need handcuffs or rope for this one. These Chinamen have given me a hint with their dope performances. I'll find something in my medicine case that will put this one to sleep for half an hour or so."

"What is it? Something like the stuff the chinks use?"

"No. I shall not bother myself about their secret drugs. Plain chloroform will do the trick for me. It will get into this chap's system and hold him still while we do what else we have to get through. And we are going to be busy, I assure you."

The medicine case—a black leather affair, that folded into a small compass, but held many bottles, besides a few instruments and antiseptic bandages—was soon out of Nick Carter's pocket and open on the floor. From it he selected a particular bottle and poured some of its contents on a handkerchief he took from his captive's pockets.

The fellow struggled desperately as the odor of the chloroform came to him. He knew what it meant. He tried to yell, but Chick thrust the yellow cushion he had moved back into his face.

"Keep still, my Celestial friend!" whispered Chick sternly. "If you don't, I'll knock you out with the butt of my pistol, and dope you afterward. Come on, chief!"

The chloroform-soaked handkerchief was pressed upon the Chinaman's mouth and nostrils until he ceased struggling. Then Nick put some more of the drug on the handkerchief and laid it across the man's face.

"That will hold him," he remarked quietly. "There is enough chloroform to make him sleep for hours. Now let's keep quiet for a little while, until we find out whether any more of them are slinking about."

"I haven't any hat," remarked Chick. "Guess I'll take this fellow's. It doesn't look overclean, but it has a very wide brim, and I can slouch it well down over my eyes. That's the main thing with me just now."

With the Chinaman's hat on, Chick lay down where he had been before, and Nick stretched out by his side. Anybody who had seen them when Sang Tu and his companions left the place would have said that they had not moved since.

For fifteen minutes they kept quite still, but with all their senses keyed up for possible enemies. The light through the skylight became stronger as the sun got higher, but there were always strange shadows lurking about among the yellow curtains, and there might have been a score of prying eyes for anything Nick Carter could tell.

"Say, chief!" whispered Chick. "Can't we make a move?"

"Very soon," was the brief reply. "Hush!"

Nick Carter had turned a little to one side, and from his nearly closed eyes he was staring at a curtain about halfway down the room, on his right.

"That curtain ought not to stir in that way," he thought. "There is no wind here, and yet it is puffing backward and forward as if there were a draft behind. This is a ghostly sort of place. If I didn't know the cunning of the Yellow Tong people, I might believe there was some preternatural influences at work here."

But Nick Carter was a level-headed man, and while he did not pretend to know positively whether beings of another world could manifest their presence in this one, he never had come into personal contact with ghosts, and had not much belief in them.

He settled himself to observe the moving curtains, feeling pretty sure there would be an explanation before long. Also, he hoped Chick would not spoil things by moving. Chick must not forget that he was supposed to be quite under the influence of a powerful drug, and, therefore, unable to so much as wink.

"By George! There is a man at the back of the curtains," muttered Nick. "Spying on us, of course. This Sang Tu is a cautious rascal. He takes no chances with anybody. Well, let him spy. I'll get him this day, in spite of his cunning. And——"

He stopped speculating, for just then the man came out from behind the curtains and revealed himself freely in the straggling daylight.

It was Matthew Bentham!

Tiptoeing along the room, he at length reached Nick Carter and Chick, and leaned over them. Then he glanced farther along, to where the chloroformed Chinese laborer lay on his back, with the big, red handkerchief on his face.

"Too bad!" murmured Bentham, as he looked down at Nick.

"What's too bad?" asked the detective, in a scarcely audible tone, and without moving his lips.

Bentham started and looked about him bewildered. He could not believe that the query had come from Nick Carter or Chick. Both were lying perfectly still, and neither seemed to be awake.

Was there some one on his heels in this room? Bentham stole cautiously to the curtained doorways, one after another, and took several minutes to make sure he was alone, except for the three unconscious men in front of the dais.

Then he came back and bent over Nick Carter, to take him by the arm and shake him slightly.

The response to this shake made him jump back as if he had had a hard push, and he stumbled over a large cushion on the floor behind him. Nick Carter had sat up, and was smiling at him.

"What is it, Bentham? Where have you been?" asked Nick.

"Hush!" returned Bentham. "You've got to move quickly if you do anything at all. They've got one of your men?"

"One of my men?" repeated Nick. "What do you mean?"

"The one you call Patsy. He is downstairs, and they have him. They've put him in the cellar. They are not going to deal with him till the afternoon, I heard one of them say."

Nick Carter stared at Matthew Bentham as if he could hardly comprehend. As a matter of fact, he could not. How had Patsy found his way to this farm, so far from the neighborhood to which he had been sent to look for Chick, in the vicinity of Tarrytown?

"Where did you see Patsy first?" he asked, looking at Bentham as if he doubted that gentleman's sanity. "Where have you been since you were behind me, looking into this room?"

"I ran out when the fuss came, and when I saw I couldn't help you. My idea was to come back later, when the gang had finished looking for others with you, as I knew they would do. Meanwhile, I was on the watch to see whether I could help you in any way."

"Did you stay on this floor?"

"No. I went down to the ground floor and out through the kitchen. I was sure they would search the whole house, and I wanted to give them a chance to do it before I came back. From the barn I could watch the doors and windows."

"I guess they did search the house," remarked Nick thoughtfully. "You did the wise thing under the circumstances."

"Wise for himself," was Chick's inward remark. "But it would have been more of a sporting thing if he'd stayed. Still, he isn't so bad, for a professor. I guess he learns wisdom from books."

"I hadn't much more than got into the barn when I saw a man slip across the yard and go into the house. I found out afterward it was your man Patsy. He hadn't more than got in, when there was the sound of a disturbance of some kind in the kitchen."

"Yes?"

"It died away almost as soon as it began. I didn't hear any more noise, and nobody came out to the yard. I was glad of that, because I did not want any visitors in the barn."

"How about the man we put in the harness cupboard?" interrupted Nick.

"I didn't look to see whether he was still there. I waited for half an hour, and then ventured in. Everything was quiet. I slipped up the stairs carefully, and I heard snoring from the bedrooms on the second floor. That told me that most of the gang were asleep. Then I came down again. I'd just got to the kitchen when I heard a number of heavy footsteps on the cellar stairs."

"Whose were they?"

"Men who looked like Chinamen, although three of them were in the sort of rough clothes that farmers wear in this country. There were five men altogether. I hid behind the stove, in a dark corner, and they all left the house. I peeped through the window and saw that they went into the barn."

"I heard them told they were to sleep there," put in Nick. "But what about Patsy?"

"He is in the cellar. I went down the steps. But there is a padlock on the door, and I could not get it open. So I determined that I would try to find you. I called out to him to know who he was. He replied that his name was Garvan—Patsy Garvan, and that he was going to make it hot for every chink in this joint. That is the way he expressed it."

"What did you say?"

"I called out, through a chink in the door, that he had friends in the house. That Nicholas Carter was here, and that I was going to find you. I told him my name. He knew it, of course. He begged me to get a move on, and I told him I would. That's the whole story."

"And a very good story it is," interposed a mocking voice.

Sang Tu, with three Chinamen by his side, stood in the opening of the yellow curtains, behind the dais, smiling at them evilly.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHICK TELLS HOW IT WAS.

Only for the barest fraction of a second did Nick Carter favor Sang Tu and his followers with a look. Then, as he stooped and gave Chick his hand, raising him to his feet with a jerk, he called out: "Come on, Bentham!" and dashed down the room and out.

It was just as he got to the opening between the curtains that he ran into Ying Lee, the confidential adviser of Sang Tu. Ying Lee seemed to be a little heavy, as if he had been disturbed in his sleep, but his small black eyes twinkled with vindictiveness as he saw Nick.

He thrust out a foot in the hope of tripping the detective. He partly succeeded, but the only effect of it was to make Nick take four stairs at a jump to save himself from falling, while Ying Lee himself tipped over and narrowly escaped following headlong.

Chick and Bentham had gone ahead, and when Nick

got to the foot of the second flight of stairs, Chick had already plunged down the cellar steps, with Matthew Bentham a close second.

It pleased Nick Carter to see that Chick had so far recovered from the drug that had been forced into his veins by the Chinaman as to be able to take an active part in what was turning out to be a very lively case. He had his flash light in one hand, and with the other was picking at the padlock with a steel wire.

"Can you make it, Chick?" asked his chief.

"Not very well. If somebody would hold the flash, I could use both hands at the lock."

Nick Carter was by his side instantly, and had taken the steel wire from his fingers, as he bade him hold the light close.

A few adroit twists of the wire, and the padlock was open. The next moment Nick Carter and his companions were inside, looking at Patsy, who had been just inside the door, listening to the efforts to release him.

He seized the hand of Chick, which was thrust out to him, and then gave his chief a military salute.

"I've obeyed orders," he said, with a queer grin. "You told me to find Chick. Well, here he is."

"You were a long time finding him," remarked Nick, smiling.

"Gee! was there a time limit on the job?" asked Patsy, in mock terror. "Have I fallen down on it, after all?"

"Indeed you have not," answered Nick Carter, slapping him on the shoulder. "What I don't understand is how you found us here."

"I didn't know you and Mr. Bentham were here," acknowledged Patsy. "I was after Chick. Still, I'm durned glad you are here. We'll clean out that nest of chinks upstairs without any trouble. They are all part of the Yellow Tong, even if the head of the gang isn't here."

Nick Carter did not trouble to tell Chick that Sang Tu, the Golden One, was in that very house. He wanted to know how Chick himself had got there.

"Dead easy," replied Patsy. "I only had to follow K206578. That was the number of the car that picked up Chick. You remember, I told you I had caught the number and written it down. Then it was the sort of car that people would notice—a great, big thing, colored a mean kind of gray. It looked more like a big bathtub than a car."

"And you traced it all the way here? But how did you come yourself?" asked Nick.

"Motor cycle."

"Hire one?"

"Sure. Got it in Tarrytown. It was a bad time in the morning to get anything. But I've been in that town before, and I know a man who has some good motor cycles that he rents out. If he hadn't been a friend of mine, I don't suppose he would have let me have it. I had to chew the rag a while with him, as it was. If it hadn't been for that, I'd have got here as quickly as the car. I wasn't far behind them, anyhow."

"But you say you traced them by their license number. How did you do that in the middle of the night?"

"I only had to pick them up that way at the beginning. I got a pointer from a Tarrytown cop on the outskirts of the town. He remembered the car when I described it. It was going rather fast, and he took the number, in case he might hear of its being in a smash-up later.

"I see," interposed Nick. "And when you knew you were on the right road, you managed to get in sight of it on your motor cycle?"

"I got where I could see its red tail light," answered Patsy. "At that, I was taking a chance, because I wasn't sure it was the car I wanted. But it was, as it turned out. You don't find many cars banging through a lonesome country like this in the small hours of the morning."

"Well, I'm glad you're here," declared Nick. "We had a fight on our hands."

"That's good!" remarked Patsy gleefully.

"The gang know we are in the house, and they are looking for us up the stairs. They don't know we've come down to the cellar. When they do come, we shall be ready for them. You have your pistol?"

"You bet!"

"Very well! We may have to shoot down some of them. I'll do that rather than let this Sang Tu get away. When we've got him as a prisoner, the power of the Yellow Tong is broken."

"I thought maybe you had him?" suggested Patsy.

"No. We found him here, and we have all the evidence we require of his being responsible for the doings of the tong. There is enough against him to put him behind the bars for a long time, if not to send him to the electric chair."

"It won't be hard to do that, considering all we know about him," put in Chick. "Who killed that man upstairs a little while ago. It was done before I came to myself."

"Ying Lee was the actual slayer," returned Nick Carter slowly. "But I don't think he will be found any worse than Sang Tu, who is at the back of all the murders committed in the name of the Yellow Tong. Since I have been in this house I have learned from the lips of this same Ying Lee, in the presence of Sang Tu, that three of its own members have been slain by the crossed needles, because they failed to commit murders which they were told to do. Then I heard Sang Tu pass sentence of death on Chick, whose remains were to be sent to China with those of the three men I have mentioned."

"That's interesting to me, anyhow," laughed Chick.

"Gee! I'd give the chinks crossed needles if I ever got a square crack at them again. I hope that's what we'll have this time. Ready, chief? Let's get busy!"

"Take a look, Chick!" directed Nick. "See that everything is clear above! We'll make a dash into the kitchen and get them by a hard smash right into them. And, remember! No quarter! Cut them down if they fight. Don't forget their devilish crossed needles!"

The talk in the cellar had been conducted in quick whispers, and had not taken up more than a minute or two. During the conversation, Nick had been listening to what was going on above. He had heard stealthy footsteps, with whispers whose purport he could not make out. But it all told him that Sang Tu and his followers all were on the alert, and that there would doubtless be a fierce battle when the little party of four in the cellar rushed up to meet the blackguards.

Chick went toward the partly open cellar door, and already had seized it to swing it wide, when it was

jerked out of his hand, and, as it slammed shut, they heard the big padlock going through the hasp.

Chick pulled vainly to get the door open, and Patsy helped. They might as well have spared their efforts. The door, which was a thick one, reënforced by wooden crosspieces, was closed and locked, and the whole four were prisoners, with no immediate prospect of escape.

There was the sound of derisive laughter outside, and Nick Carter knew it came from the throat of the chief of the Yellow Tong—the Golden One, who called himself Sang Tu.

CHAPTER IX.

TIGHTENING TOILS.

The first impulse of Nick Carter and his two assistants was to look around the cellar to see what chance there would be at the windows. Patsy had done this in a casual way already, before his friends found him, and decided that there was no hope in that direction. He did it again now, merely from force of habit.

The windows were only horizontal slits, not more than six inches wide, and there were four of them. They gave sufficient light for one to find his way about, without flooding the cellar with dazzling illumination.

This was the way Chick put it, in a bitter tone, and Patsy added that, for taking snapshot photos that would win prizes, it was "very Hoboken." In plain language, it was so dark that they could not make out each other's faces except in a very vague and misty way.

"We can't get out through those apologies for windows," said Nick Carter. "But we can batter down that door. It will take some time, because it is heavy, and there is nothing in the cellar to be used as a battering-ram. Still, if we all jam against it together, our combined weight will soon shake it off its hinges."

"That's what!" cried Patsy. "Let's get at it!"

"Not just yet," negatived Nick. "Give the rascals a chance to get away first. We don't want to let them see our hand right away. They think we are secure down here, and they will probably go to bed again. No matter how villainous a man may be, he has got to sleep at some time."

Matthew Bentham had not offered any suggestions. He realized that, in a situation like this, he was not the equal of the great detective and his two experienced assistants. He was quite willing to led them lead, and he would do his best to follow.

Student as he was, with a strong love of his quiet library and a congenial book, he was not without physical courage, as he had proved already. If there were to be another fight—as seemed extremely probable—he would do his part. But he did not feel that he could improve on the plans his three companions would eventually form.

He was about to say something like this, when there came a loud crash at one of the narrow window openings, and it immediately became black. There had been a heavy plank or log placed against it, keeping out every splinter of daylight.

Before they had time to comment on this, the next window was darkened in a similar manner, followed by the third and fourth also being blocked up. The cellar was in pitch darkness. Again they heard the mocking laugh, but this time it was out in the yard.

"Where's your flash, Patsy?" asked Nick Carter.

"I forgot to take it with me when I left the house last night. I've been sorry more than once since, for it would have been a great help on the dark road."

"I have mine," said Chick. "But some of those fellows must have been tinkering with it while I was under the influence of that dope. It won't light at all now. I noticed it was flickering when I had it turned on the padlock, as I was trying to get into the cellar. The battery has given out, I guess."

"Well, I have my flash," remarked Nick Carter, as he took it from a pocket and turned the white glow in all directions. "It doesn't light up the whole cellar, but it helps. There are so many posts down here, that it would take half a dozen flashes to get light in every part of it."

"Well, one light is a whole lot better than being in the dark," commented Patsy. "I wouldn't care so much for being in darkness, anyhow, so long as we get at these chinks. That's the main thing, after all."

"We'll go after them very soon," Nick told him, in a comforting tone. "You can be sure that we are going to put an extinguisher on the Yellow Tong this time. We shall have to, because, if we do not, I know none of us will ever get out of this cellar alive."

He said this in a serious tone, because it was a serious statement. But there was no suggestion of fear. Nick Carter had been at grips with too many relentless enemies in the course of his long career, to be nervous when he found himself facing a new foe.

That Sang Tu meant death to the whole four of them he was convinced. The letter from James Sanderson to himself and Matthew Bentham was the first step. Sang Tu meant to get back the secret records of the Yellow Tong which had fallen into the hands of Matthew Bentham, and to do that he believed he must murder the well-known scientist.

Doubtless it had seemed to the Golden One that he could dispose of Bentham and the detective he hated so bitterly without any one suspecting him, by the decoy letter sent by Sanderson. It was a clever trick, and at first it seemed likely to be successful. Only the shrewdness of Nick Carter had defeated it.

He had never trusted Sanderson from the first.

Now that Sang Tu had contrived to trap them all in this cellar, there could be no let up in the fighting until the tong men were crushed. Nick Carter had quite made up his mind to that, and he had that confidence in final victory which is felt by all brave men as they go into a conflict of life and death.

He turned out his flash, after looking about, remarking that it would not be wise to wear out the battery by keeping on the light when it was not required.

Patsy and Chick had routed out an old bench from the back of the cellar, which appeared to have been used for standing washtubs on, and which was long enough to give all four of them a seat. They took their places here just before Nick put out his light, and settled down to wait patiently until he should give the signal to attack the door.

"This bench will be useful, perhaps," he suggested. "If we bang it against the door, end on, it may make a pretty fair battering-ram. Oh, we shall get out all right, somehow or other."

His confident tone put heart into Matthew Bentham.

Neither Chick nor Patsy required anything to keep up their courage. They felt that, with their chief by their side, they could not fail.

Nick Carter knew how his followers felt, even though he could not see their faces, and they made no comment on what he had said. With Matthew Bentham it might be different. The detective made due allowance for this being an adventure such as the quiet scholar of Prospect Park had never been concerned in before.

In silence they sat for at least fifteen minutes. Then Nick Carter, whose hearing was always acute, thought he heard a slight jingling sound, as if something metal had struck another piece of metal.

"It might have been fancy," he thought. "None of the others seemed to notice it. Still——"

He listened intently for several seconds, without hearing anything more. But he could not persuade himself that he had been only the victim of fancy.

"Chick," he whispered. "Did you hear anything just now—as if something had hit against a gas pipe. It was a very slight rattle, but I thought I caught something of that kind."

"I didn't hear anything," replied Chick.

"It isn't likely there are gas pipes down here," put in Patsy. "I haven't seen anything but kerosene lamps in this joint."

"There it is again," declared Nick, in tense tones. "Something jingling—or chinking, rather."

He turned on his flash, and, as he saw what was in front of his face, he fell back as far as he could. The bench was against the wall, and it was not possible to get far away from the object that had filled him with horror.

It was the crossed needles!

Two long needles, crossed and held together by a touch of solder at the intersection, were hanging to a cord from the roof of the cellar, and were swinging in a circle before the face of himself and Chick, who was next to him.

"What kind of trick is this?" he muttered. "Well, I'll soon fix that."

Holding his flash light so that it shone on the swaying needles, he fumbled in his pocket for his knife. He had a small pair of scissors among the tools that were cased in the knife handle.

While he still tried to find his knife, a muffled shriek broke from Matthew Bentham.

"Look, Carter! Here is another! And there are two more just beyond!" gasped the scientist. "What does it mean? They are the crossed needles, are they not? In mercy's name, let's get out of this awful place!"

Patsy had not made any remark, although he saw the four pairs of crossed needles swinging about, and understood, quite as well as Matthew Bentham, that it was the purpose of the men of the Yellow Tong to kill them all in the cellar—and perhaps prove an alibi afterward.

The demoniacal cunning of the plan was obvious. In the darkness, the almost certainty of some or all of the prisoners in the cellar being touched by the poisoned needles was obvious. Yet no one could say that the deed was the work of any particular person. The needles would be removed after doing their work, and if there were any legal inquiry afterward, it would be argued that death had resulted from heart failure.

Nick Carter could not find his knife, and he was compelled to admit to himself that it was nowhere about him. He must have lost it, or been robbed.

"Keep still, everybody!" he whispered. "I'll dispose of these needles. Somebody lend me a knife."

But, strangely enough—unless it were all part of a deep-laid plot—nobody had a knife about him. Bentham never carried one, he said. As for the other three, there had been plenty of opportunity for some of the men connected with the Yellow Tong to pick the pockets of their prisoners.

"It was that fellow, Sanderson, who got mine, I have no doubt," thought Nick Carter. "Well, I shall have to break the cords. The only thing is that, if I disturb them, I may swing the needles against somebody—myself or one of the others."

It looked like a dilemma which might be easily overcome. But the insidious movements of the long, poisoned needles made it much more serious than it seemed at first glance. The least touch would be death, and in breaking the cord, how easy it would be to swing one of the needles into the very face of one of the four men huddled in that dark cellar.

"Stand as far away as you can, all of you," warned Nick. "You can't get past them, but keep close against the wall. I'll break them down one by one."

"Let me get the one on the far end, and you take the other, chief," suggested Patsy Garvan. "Gee! You oughtn't to have to do everything."

"No. Keep back, Patsy!" commanded Nick shortly. "I don't want to lose you just because you always insist on running into unnecessary danger."

"All right! But it isn't any more unnecessary for me than it is for you," grumbled Patsy. "I could get those crossed needles down in no time if you didn't stop me."

Nick Carter took no notice of this. He knew that however much Patsy might protest, he always obeyed orders. What Nick had to do now was to get these deadly needles out of the way, and it had to be done carefully and with due caution.

He had just seized one of the thin cords, and discovered that it was too tough to be broken with the bare hands, when a pistol shot rang out in the cellar, with deafening reverberations. At the same instant, a flash lamp in his hand was shattered to pieces, sending a shock up his arm to his very shoulder.

The cellar was in black darkness, and he knew that the poisoned crossed needles were still swinging!

CHAPTER X.

CLEARING THE WAY.

"Keep perfectly still, everybody!" was Nick Carter's sharp order.

"Are you hurt, chief?" asked Chick anxiously.

"Not the slightest," was the quick reply. "They've put out my flash light, but that is all the damage they've done. Stand still, and I'll beat their murderous game yet."

It was now that something rattled against the top of his hat. He could feel the slight impact, and a thrill of indignation, mingled with horror, shot through him, as he knew that the villains who had dropped the crossed needles into the cellar, by way of holes in the kitchen

flooring, were trying to prevent his escape by following him with them as he moved about.

"I'll soon fix that," he muttered to himself. Then, a little louder, for the benefit of his companions: "Stoop! Quick!"

He waited until he could hear that the three others had obeyed his injunction. Then he struck a match.

The four pairs of crossed needles were swinging wilder than ever. He gritted his teeth, and he uttered a low malediction on the Yellow Tong, as well as the head man in it who was so grandiloquently dubbed the Golden One.

As if in response to the inaudible execration, there came to him the mocking laugh that he had heard several times since he had been down in this cellar.

"All right!" he hissed. "Laugh, if you like. But here is a way out of your trap, I think."

An explosion tore through the darkness of the cellar, and the light of the match lasted long enough to show to the three others that Nick Carter stood with a pistol in his hand, a light spiral of smoke at its muzzle.

"I've brought down one of them," he exclaimed triumphantly, as the match went out.

"What's the game, chief?" queried Patsy. "Gee! That was a shaker for the old cellar. What were you firing at, anyhow?"

"Keep your heads very low! Down on your hands and knees," was all Nick replied. "I'm going to fire again."

"You are?" cried Patsy. "Well, here's where we all duck."

Nick Carter lighted another of the wax matches he always carried in a metal water-tight box, and, as he saw that the three other pairs of crossed needles were swinging more violently than ever, he aimed at the nearest and fired again.

This time the concussion did not put out the match. The detective held it as far from the pistol as he could when he pulled the trigger, and the air waves did not reach it, as they had before. He had the satisfaction of seeing that there were only two pairs of needles now.

"Look out!" whispered Patsy. "There is somebody at the door."

"It won't be healthy for them to open it," returned Nick Carter, as he prepared to shoot down the third pair of needles. "I had plenty of bullets left here."

"Shall I let go through the door?" asked Patsy. "I've got my gun. They didn't find that when they went through me."

"No. Don't shoot unless I give orders," was the detective's reply. "Keep your heads low, all of you."

Two more shots were fired, and each one brought down a pair of crossed needles. He lighted a match when he had disposed of the last pair and looked about the floor without stirring from his original position.

"Don't move, any of you!" he warned. "If you tread on one of these needles, it will go through your shoe leather. Wait till I gather them up."

With the aid of his wax match—which burned as steadily as a small candle—he found all four pairs of crossed needles, and, picking them up gingerly by their cords, one by one, he put them in a corner, where they would be comparatively harmless.

Then, in pitch darkness, he whispered to his companions to remain perfectly still, while they tried to determine what would be the next move of the enemy.

It was not reasonable to suppose that Sang Tu and his followers would go calmly off to bed after such a racket as there had been in the cellar. Four pistol shots make a great deal of noise in a confined space without counting the bang of the weapon that had shattered Nick Carter's flash light.

Sitting on the bench, without being able to distinguish any light, the four prisoners waited, with their nerves keyed to a tenseness that seemed to draw up their very sinews.

Nothing could be heard for several minutes. Then Nick knew that men were on the stairs, outside the cellar door. It was hardly the sense of hearing that told him this. He could not have sworn that he heard anything. It was rather a subtle communication of human presence which came to him in a way that he could not describe.

"There is something that seems to tell me when people are spying on me," he told himself inaudibly. "Even when they are on the other side of a door like that, I know it. Well, we'll get busy."

Leaning toward Chick, who sat next to him, he told him they were going to batter down the door with the bench, as they had intended to do before the shutters were put to the window openings by the enemy.

"We've got to work in absolute silence, Chick," he continued. "They are on the stairs, wondering what we are going to do. It is our business to keep them guessing. Tell Patsy in a whisper, and give him the word to pass it on to Matthew Bentham. But, above all, no sound."

Chick did not reply, except by a nudge, to indicate that he understood. He whispered to Patsy, and Patsy told Bentham. In a moment or two, Chick passed back the information that everybody knew what was to be done.

"All right!" answered Nick. "Get off this bench and wait till I light a match. Then carry it over to the door."

The order was obeyed, and Nick was pleased to see that the bench was heavy enough to take the strength of all three of his companions to lift and carry it along the cellar. It would make a good battering-ram.

Before he put out the match, Nick Carter took careful note of the position of the bench and the places where the other three held it. He wanted to be in front, so that, when the door should be broken down, he would be the first to face the foe.

Once more in darkness, they waited for at least a minute. During this interval, Nick could distinguish faintly the sound of breathing on the other side of the door, and he knew there were at least three persons there.

At last, he whispered that they were to let go, but not until he gave the signal, with a distinct "Now!" He must get a firm hold of the bench before they ran with it at the door.

There was a pause, while the detective got a firm grip of the bench, with Chick by his side, and the other two opposite. He waited a moment, after he had whispered "Is everybody ready?" and had received an answer in the affirmative. Then he gave the word for action: "Now!"

With a mighty bang, the bench struck the door. The result was a splintering, tearing crash. But—the door held!

"Again!" cried Nick Carter, not trying now to hold down his voice.

Smash went the end of the heavy bench against the door for the second time. There was more effect from the blow now.

The door, weakened by the first assault, could not withstand another. As the bench came against it, the splintering was more pronounced. Then the hinges gave way on one side and the padlock on the other. Down went the door, falling on the stairs, and three men retreated in wild disorder.

"All right boys!" shouted Nick Carter, as he drew his automatic. "Come on! Don't let them get away! I'll take the first man!"

Notwithstanding the gloom, which made it difficult to make out one person from another, Nick had recognized the tall, broad-shouldered man, in a tightly buttoned frock coat and black slouch hat, who had led his followers in an intended attack on the prisoners. He was Sang Tu.

The Golden One had discarded his embroidered yellow robe and spectacles and Nick noticed that his black hair was short. If he had a pigtail, it was thoroughly concealed.

Behind him were half a dozen men, and the detective realized that the whole force of the Yellow Tong who were gathered in the farmhouse had come down to wipe out the four prisoners at once.

"The needles, Ying Lee!" roared Sang Tu, as he closed with Nick Carter. "Give them to this one first!"

But Ying Lee, who also had got rid of his Chinese raiment, and appeared now like any ordinary American, had enough to do to look after himself. He may have had some crossed needles about him, but certainly he had no time to produce them, for Chick had him by the throat and was bearing him down, helpless.

Sang Tu drew a pistol and pressed it against Nick Carter's cheek, just as the detective rushed at him. But Nick was prepared for this sort of thing, and he turned the weapon aside just as it was discharged.

He felt a streak of pain across his face, and the flash of the automatic was so near that it blinded him for an instant. But that was all. There was an exclamation from Chick, and then a heavy fall.

"Good!" roared Sang Tu, in English. "That's how you'll all get it! Your man's gone, Carter!"

But Sang Tu was mistaken. It was Ying Lee who had received the bullet right through his brain, and had gone tumbling down to the bottom of the cellar steps, while Chick sprang at another of the murderous invaders.

Sang Tu saw his error, and, as Nick Carter wrenched the pistol from his grasp, letting it drop to the stairs, he turned and dashed away!

The sudden retreat took the detective by surprise. He stopped for a moment, and seeing that one of the Chinamen in laboring clothes held a pistol pointed at Patsy's head, he shot out his left fist, and, catching the fellow behind the ear, sent him rolling down the stairs, on top of Ying Lee. He was not killed, but Nick knew he would not be in condition to make trouble for half an hour, at least.

The battle on the stairs was raging with relentless fury. Sang Tu had gone. But there were five men now opposed to Chick, Patsy, and Bentham.

One of the five was knocked out by the hard fist of Patsy Garvan even as Nick glanced about him, to see how the fight was going.

"Wow! That's a gentle touch, from Touchville!" roared Patsy, who was wild with excitement. "Now for another."

He was exchanging blows now with one of the gang who looked like an American, and who most assuredly was not a Chinaman, for he fought with the skill of an accomplished boxer. Moreover, he had the advantage of standing on a step above Patsy.

Nick hesitated a second. He felt as if he ought to stay and help his friends—more especially as two more of the gang had just got to the top of the cellar stairs.

But Sang Tu might get away! If he did, there would be a little gained by all this desperate adventure. Nick Carter knew that if he captured seven or eight other members of the Yellow Tong, they would be of little value from the point of view of justice and safety to the world at large.

The tong must be crushed, and the only way to do that was to put the fountainhead out of existence—the individual whom his followers called the Golden One, but who was known to Nick and the others who had been pursuing him for so long as Sang Tu, of Peking.

Nick Carter rushed up the stairs. As he did so, he caught the purring of a motor car in the yard.

Sang Tu had left his followers to their fate, and was trying to make his own escape while he had an opportunity!

CHAPTER XI.

THE CRUSHING OF THE TONG.

The door of the kitchen was open, and in a bound Nick Carter had reached the outside of the house. He was just in time to see the great, gray car, with its number, K206578, staring him in the face, and with Sang Tu at the wheel, coming from the side of the barn.

Nick Carter noted the number on the license plate merely from force of habit. No matter how strenuous might be the situation in which he found himself, he could not help observing details. It was part of his system which had come to be something very like second nature.

The Golden One was turning the car to get to the gate, and this compelled him to drive slowly. Nick was able, for this reason, to grasp the edge of the car at the back, and gain the running board.

He was about to vault into the rear seat, when a powerful fist shot up and caught him under the chin with such force that he was knocked backward, and only escaped falling to the roadway by the firm grip he had with his left hand.

His right hand had loosened involuntarily, and as he staggered under the terrific impact of the fist, he lay in a huddled heap on the running board, but still holding on with the one hand.

Only for an instant did he remain in this position. His brain cleared, and he got to an upright position. Then he saw that the person who had hit him was none other than the big prize fighter whose name had been given to him by James Sanderson simply as "Josh."

Josh was grinning, and, as the detective straightened up, he tried to send in another sledge-hammer punch.

"Thought you had me laid out in that harness cupboard, didn't you?" he grunted. "It was a good bluff, but you didn't get away with it. Take that!"

The pugilist might have been more successful if he

had not wasted his energies and divided his attention by talking. As it was, he found Nick Carter more than ready for him, and the short jab he received on the point of the chin rendered him hors de combat immediately.

When Josh crumpled up on the floor of the car, Nick leaped over the seat and held his automatic pistol to the ear of Sang Tu.

"Stop this car, Sang Tu," he commanded sharply. "This is business. I shall pull the trigger if you don't obey. You will be as valuable dead as alive. We are going to put an end to the Yellow Tong, and the way to do that is to put you out of the world. Whether I do it now, or you die in the electric chair later, is of little consequence."

The expression of diabolical ferocity that brought a flush into the face of the Golden One told Nick Carter that there was no thought of yielding. Yet he hesitated to pull the trigger on a man who was for the time unable to defend himself.

"Carter," hissed Sang Tu, in English, "I have sworn to kill you, and I never yet broke an oath."

He opened the throttle wider, and the great, gray machine was bounding along the State road they had turned into at a speed which a glance at the speedometer would have told was more than a mile a minute. He was a splendid driver, however, and the motor car did not swerve in the slightest as it ate up the miles.

"You may have to break one at last," replied Nick, still holding the automatic ready for use. "I have the drop on you, and, at the first sign of mischief on your part, you are a dead man."

"You wouldn't dare to shoot," sneered Sang Tu. "It would be murder, and you Americans have a babyish fear of that. You talk big, but I am not afraid of you. You can stay on this car, if you like. I am going to some friends of mine, and you will find that they are not so afraid of killing as you are."

"If we meet any one who tries to interfere, you won't live long enough to see the outcome," was the detective's cool response. "But I don't intend to let you drive away very far from the farmhouse we have just left. Close that throttle and put on the brake!"

Nick gave this command in a stern tone that had its effect, in spite of the obstinacy of the man at the wheel. It was only for an instant, however. With a mocking laugh—the same sort of laugh that Nick had heard in the cellar—Sang Tu threw the throttle open again, and once more they were going sixty miles an hour.

The detective saw that he must take vigorous action if he meant to overcome this rascal who realized that he had come to a crisis in which he must either win or die.

"Take your hand off that wheel!" ordered Nick, as he reached over to it with one hand, while the other still grasped the pistol. As he tried to get a grip of the wheel, involuntarily he pressed the cold muzzle of the pistol against Sang Tu's cheek.

This seemed to drive the Chinaman into a perfect frenzy. He howled like a wild animal, and whether he tried to speak in English or Chinese the detective never knew.

The car had come to a down grade, and the speed had increased from sixty to nearly seventy miles an hour. Now the machine began to rock dangerously, for the road was full of bumps and ruts, and Nick was obliged to cease his efforts to get hold of the wheel, and to cling to the iron frame of the wind shield, to enable him to keep his feet.

It seemed as if the driver had lost control.

"Stop, you crazy fool!" Nick shouted. "Let me get at the emergency brake!"

"Don't you touch anything on this car!" bellowed Sang Tu. "If you do, I'll——"

Those were his last words. The wheels in front struck a sharp rise in the road, the hind wheels skidded, as the steering gear slipped away from him, and the car dashed across the roadway toward the ditch.

With a bang that could have been heard for a mile in that quiet country, the car struck a tree—and in a flash was only a chaotic mass of bent and broken ironwork and splintered wood!

For a few moments Nick lay in the road, where he had been thrown. He was getting his ideas together. Then he sat up and felt himself over.

"Nothing broken about me," he muttered. "It's a wonder I'm alive. What about Sang Tu?"

Yes, what about Sang Tu? Where was the Golden One now?

Nick Carter shook his head as he examined the wreck of the machine and saw that the bodies of both Josh and Sang Tu were underneath.

"They must both have been killed on the instant," he said slowly. "Well, it may save trouble in future. He was so cunning, and he had so much money behind him, that he might have escaped, even if I had got him into court. He would have had a jury trial, of course, and who knows what a jury will decide? Yes, it is horrible like this, but it is better for the world. You boasted to me, Sang Tu, that you never had broken an oath. This is the time you were compelled to do so. But it may be that only death would have been the reason. Perhaps—perhaps!"

Nick Carter could not remove the wrecked motor car alone. It weighed at least two tons. He could only look up and down the road for somebody to help him.

There were no houses in sight, and he did not see anybody working in the miles of fields that stretched away on one side. On the other was a dense wood, from which he could hardly expect succor.

"Hello! What's that?" he ejaculated. "I believe I can hear an engine. Yes, it is! A motor car! But where is it?"

He kept his eye on a bend in the road about half a mile back, and which he remembered the car had swung around sickeningly on two wheels. He could not expect to see the car that was coming until it rounded that bend.

For several minutes he waited. Then, with a roar that had been rapidly getting louder, the big car in which James Sanderson had brought him and Matthew Bentham to a farmhouse, swept into view.

The man at the wheel was bending over, as he shot the machine along almost as fast as Nick himself had traveled. Nick could not get a good look at him. But, as he came up to the wreck, he slowed up with a jerk, and showed his face.

"Chick!" cried Carter joyfully. "I thought it looked like your general cut. Where are Patsy and Bentham, and——"

"And the Yellow Tong? Why, the whole caboodle of them are safely tied up—those that are not killed. We licked them without half trying. Patsy and Mr. Bentham are keeping guard over them. What's happened here," he asked, as he shut off the power and jumped to the road. "Great heavens! Is that the man himself under there?"

"It is the man—Sang Tu," replied Nick. "The other one is a poor wretch under the control of the tong. They called him Josh. I don't know his other name—if he had one. But it makes no difference. He will never need a name again in this world. They are both dead."

Even the two of them could not raise the fallen car, although they tried.

"We might jack it up, perhaps, Chick. But it would take some time."

"Yes, and Patsy is worried about you. Let's run back and bring them on. That will be the quickest way to get over it. Will you drive, or shall I?"

"You do it, Chick. You brought the car here. I dare say you can take it back."

They found five prisoners at the farmhouse, and it was not until Nick had telephoned to the nearest town for a squad of police and a wagon that he looked over the situation at the farmhouse.

He was still going through the house when a wagon containing a sensible-looking, elderly man, obviously a farmer, and his three stalwart sons, came up and said that he had rented the house to a certain William Jones for two weeks, and that the time was up to-day.

This farmer never did know the truth about the Yellow Tong, nor what a part his home had played in the capture of its notorious leader. It happened to be a time in the year when there was nothing doing of any importance on the farm, and the rent Mr. Jones had offered was large enough to make him set aside everything else for the sake of handling such a large sum of money.

In due course the five men captured were found guilty of conspiracy, and were sentenced to long terms in a Federal prison.

The dead men were buried after a coroner's inquest which did not let any extraordinary facts get out to the public. Nick Carter managed that, especially as the government at Washington agreed with him that "public policy" would be better served by keeping as secret as possible the crushing of the Yellow Tong.

The valuable idols and other curios that belonged to Sang Tu, and which had helped him to maintain his assumed character of a law-abiding scientist, are now in the possession of Matthew Bentham. But the records of the great tong are in steel safes in Washington, and only persons high up in the government ever have access to them.

Nick Carter received a large fee for his great work against the Yellow Tong, but he says that is the least part of the satisfaction he feels in having crushed so hideous a monster.

THE END.

"The Mask of Death; or, Nick Carter's Curious Case," will be the title of the long, complete story which you will find in the next issue, No. 154, of the NICK CARTER STORIES, out August 21st. In this story are narrated some of the most unusual adventures which have ever befallen the greatest of all American detectives. Then, too, you will also find several interesting articles, together with the usual installment of the serial story now running in this publication.

SNAPSHOT ARTILLERY.

By BERTRAM LEBHAR.

CHAPTER I.

THE REST CURE.

The great specialist wrote something on a prescription pad, tore off the leaf, and handed it to his visitor. "I have jotted down here a list of the things you may eat and the things you must leave severely alone," he said. "It will be necessary for you to adhere rigidly to this diet for some time. It is also imperative that you take a vacation immediately. Let your business go for a couple of weeks, and go to some quiet place in the country to rest up. Be in the open air as much as possible, but avoid violent exercise. Do you happen to know anything about photography?"

"A little," the young man replied dryly.

"Good! That will be just the thing. Take a camera along with you, and spend the next two weeks taking snapshots in the open air. That will be a complete change for you, and——"

"But, doctor," the young man began, his blue eyes twinkling, "I——"

"Don't interrupt, please," the specialist said. He was notoriously brusque, but had reached an age and an eminence in his profession where he could get away with it. "As I was saying, taking snapshots will be a pleasant pastime for you, and will keep you from thinking about your business. By the way, what is your business?"

"Taking snapshots," his patient answered, with a smile. "That was what I was about to tell you just now, doctor. I am a camera man on the staff of the New York *Sentinel*."

"Humph!" The specialist looked a little crestfallen. "That's different, of course. In that case, be sure not to take a camera along with you. Go some place where there's good fishing, and spend the next two weeks with a rod and line, instead. I want you to have a complete change."

"Is it absolutely necessary, doctor?" the patient inquired anxiously. "I don't mind the dieting, of course—that part will be easy. But I hate the idea of loafing for two weeks. Really, my work isn't any strain. I enjoy it, and——"

"Don't argue with me, sir," the physician interrupted sternly. "If you want to get well, you must do just as I tell you. If it weren't necessary, I shouldn't recommend it."

His patient sighed. "All right; I suppose I'll have to do it. How much do I owe you, doctor?"

"Humph! My regular fee is twenty dollars; but, in your case, as I presume your income is not very large, young man, five dollars will do."

His visitor's face flushed. "I beg your pardon; I am not a charity patient," he said indignantly. "I can afford to pay your regular fee."

He took a roll of bills from his pocket, and, peeling off two tens, handed them to the specialist.

"Well, well!" the latter remarked to the young woman who served as his private secretary, after the patient had gone out. "I didn't know that newspaper men were so prosperous. I really believe I hurt that young man's feelings by offering to reduce the fee. When he said that he was a mere camera man on a newspaper, I took it for granted that he couldn't afford to pay the regular amount."

"Is his name Hawley?" the young woman inquired.

The specialist referred to the card which his patient had left. "Yes, that's the name—Frank Hawley."

"I thought so," the secretary exclaimed. "I have heard about him from my cousin, who is employed in the business office of the *Sentinel*. From what he tells me, this Mr. Hawley must be a remarkable man. He isn't an ordinary newspaper photographer. His skill and daring have made him quite a celebrity in his line. On Park Row they call him 'The Camera Chap.' No wonder he could afford to pay you your regular fee, doctor; he draws as big a salary as some editors."

The brows of the medical man wrinkled. "Come to think of it, I believe I, too, have heard of him before," he said. "I have an idea he is the same audacious rascal who some time ago masqueraded as my friend and colleague, Doctor Braxton, in order to get into a millionaire's home and take a picture of his child."

The secretary laughed. She was a young woman with a sense of humor. "Yes, that was Mr. Hawley, doctor. That was one of his exploits which my cousin described. The newspapers called it 'The Billion-dollar Snapshot.' Nobody had ever been able to get the child's picture until the Camera Chap employed that clever ruse."

Her employer glared at her. He had no sense of humor. "A clever ruse, eh? I only wish I'd realized who the fellow was while he was here. I'd have charged him fifty dollars instead of twenty. My friend Doctor Braxton has never forgiven that outrage."

Meanwhile, the subject of this conversation was wending his way toward the office of the New York *Sentinel*, a frown upon his usually smiling countenance.

"This rest-cure proposition doesn't appeal to me at all," he muttered. "I almost wish now that I hadn't consulted any specialist. Still, he knows his business, and I'll have to do as he says. It's no use seeking medical advice—especially high-priced advice—if you're not willing to follow it. Well, it's only for two weeks. I guess I can stand it."

He entered the *Sentinel's* editorial rooms, passed through the big "city room," which at that hour presented a vista of empty desks—their owners being out chasing the news of the day—and knocked on the door of the private office of Tom Paxton, the managing editor.

The latter, a man of middle age, but exceedingly boyish looking for one holding so responsible a position, greeted the Camera Chap with a cheery smile.

"Well, Hawley, what's on your mind?" he inquired, half banteringly, half anxiously. "Has some vengeful victim smashed your precious camera to smithereens, or has the *Daily News* scored a picture scoop on us? Your rueful mien prepares me for bad tidings."

The Camera Chap laughed. "It isn't anything quite as bad as either of those things you've mentioned," he replied; "but it's unpleasant enough. The fact is, Mr. Paxton, my physician has forbidden me to take any more pictures until——"

"What's that?" the managing editor cried, pitching his voice high above its normal register.

"For a couple of weeks," Hawley explained; and Paxton's face lost its alarmed expression.

"Oh, for a couple of weeks!" he said, with a smile of relief. "That's a different story. But what's the idea, Hawley?"

"I've been feeling pretty seedy of late," Hawley explained. "My head has been aching as though it were going to burst. So I thought I'd better see a doctor. He looked me over, and pronounced it a case of nervous indigestion."

The managing editor chuckled. "Nervous indigestion, eh? Excuse me, Hawley, but that's a hard one to swallow. The indigestion part is all right, but the idea of your being nervous! Why, it is the general impression around this office that you haven't any nerves."

The Camera Chap grinned. "Well, that's what the doctor called it. He's put me on a strict diet, and ordered me to take a two weeks' vacation."

"Humph! Who's the doctor?"

"Doctor Allyne."

"Old Hugo Allyne, eh? Well, if he says you've got nervous indigestion, we've got to believe it. There isn't a better physician in the world than that crusty old boy. You'd better do as he says, old man, and lay off for a couple of weeks. Take longer if you find it's necessary. You haven't taken a vacation in three years, so there's certainly one coming to you. Where are you thinking of going?"

"A friend of mine who has a place in the Catskills has been urging me to come out there for some time. I'll avail myself of his invitation."

"The Catskills!" exclaimed the managing editor, with a grimace. "They're all right in their way, of course; but if it's mountains you're looking for, Hawley, why be a piker? What's the matter with the Adirondacks?"

"Too far from Park Row," the Camera Chap replied. "Something big may break here while I'm away, and necessitate my coming back to the office in a hurry. I'm going to leave you my telegraph address."

"All right," said Paxton, laughing. "But you can rest assured I shan't wire you to come back unless all New York is burning, and we can't get hold of anybody else to snapshot the conflagration. Seriously speaking, old man, I want you to have a thorough rest. Don't limit your vacation to two weeks. Take as long as you want, and while you're away forget that there is such a thing in the world as a photograph."

"I'll try to," the Camera Chap promised.

But later that day, when the managing editor of the *Sentinel*, hurrying along Park Row on his way back from luncheon, espied Hawley outside the Sentinel Building in the act of entering a taxicab, he observed that that young man had a suit case in his right hand, a fishing-rod outfit in his left, and, suspended from his shoulder by a strap, a familiar oblong case of black leather, the sight of which brought a smile to Paxton's face.

"Well, can you beat that!" the editor chuckled. "I'll be hanged if he isn't taking his camera with him! Bet he doesn't know it, either. No doubt he grabbed it and slung it over his shoulder out of sheer force of habit."

Paxton's first impulse was to step forward and call the amusing fact to the Camera Chap's attention. But upon second thought he refrained.

"What's the use?" he chuckled. "I might just as well let him go ahead. If he left his camera behind him, the chances are a thousand to one that as soon as he stepped off the train he'd drop in at the first store and buy another. Rest cure or no rest cure, that chap simply couldn't exist without a camera. Deprived of it, he'd be about as happy as an elephant without a trunk."

CHAPTER II.

THE RIGHT KIND OF FISH.

For two days after his arrival at his friend's place in the Catskills, the Camera Chap faithfully carried out his physician's instructions.

He refrained from eating the things which the great specialist had put on the taboo list, and he spent the whole day in the open air, beside a purling mountain stream, patiently offering bait to fish which persistently refused to bite.

But on the third day he grew exceedingly weary of this inactive life.

"This back-to-nature business is all right for those who enjoy that sort of thing," he said to his friend; "but I must confess that I don't. I guess there isn't enough poetry in my soul to enable me to appreciate it."

"I'm sorry that the fish are not biting," said his host apologetically. "I've never known anybody to have such bad luck up here before. You ought to have seen the great catches that we made this time last year!"

Hawley shook his head. "It wouldn't make much difference even if they were to bite by the hundreds," he said. "Fishing is a sport that has never greatly appealed to me. It sort of goes against my grain to hook the poor little beggars."

His host laughed. "By jinks, Hawley, I never gave you credit for being so tender-hearted," he exclaimed. "How about the sufferings of the human fish you catch with your camera? If you're so squeamish, I should think you'd find that sort of sport distasteful, too. You can depend upon it that when some of your victims see their pictures in the *Sentinel* it hurts them quite as much as your hook hurts the fish."

"It may hurt them as much, but not in the same place," rejoined the Camera Chap, with a laugh. "At all events, I must confess that their sufferings don't worry me at all. You see, they're not small and comparatively helpless, like the kind of fish you angle for. They're as big as I am, often bigger and more powerful; so it's more or less of an equal fight. Getting a focus on a fiery-tempered man who has made up his mind that he isn't going to stand for having his picture taken is the greatest sport in the world. There isn't any other game that can come near it."

He sighed, and was pensively silent for a little while. Then he said abruptly: "Say, old man, what's the name of the nearest big town, and how far is it away from here?"

His host pointed to the steep mountain road which ran past his place. Follow that road for about twenty miles, and it will bring you to Oldham," he answered. "That's the nearest town of any consequence. Oldham has a population of fifty-six thousand, according to the last census, and it is quite an up-to-date and hustling burg."

The Camera Chap jumped impetuously to his feet. "Twenty miles is a little too far to walk," he said. "I wonder if you'd mind lending me your motor cycle?"

"Why, of course you can have it, if you want it," his host replied. "But what in the name of Sam Hill do you want to go to Oldham for? I thought you came out here for a rest."

"I know I did," replied Hawley. "But if I don't see a trolley car and a uniformed cop pretty soon I honestly think I shall go raving mad. I hope you don't mind my running away like this, old man? I'll be back here to-night or to-morrow morning, but I've simply got to go to Oldham for a few hours."

Seeing that it was useless to try to dissuade him, his host brought out the motor cycle, and a few minutes later Hawley was tobogganing down the steep mountain road toward the paved streets, electric lamps, trolley cars, and all the other features of city life for which his soul craved.

Strapped to the handlebar of his motor cycle was the same black leather oblong case which, in a fit of absent-mindedness, he had slung across his shoulders when starting out from the *Sentinel* office.

For two days he had conscientiously obeyed his physician's and Managing Editor Paxton's injunction to endeavor to forget that there was any such thing in the world as a camera; but on this, the third day, his yearning for the companionship of that precious black box was too great to be resisted.

Not that there was any set purpose in his mind to take snapshots when he got to Oldham. He merely took his camera along so as to be prepared for emergencies. To have visited a town of fifty-six thousand population without having his snapshot apparatus within instant reach of his hand would have caused the Camera Chap to feel as uncomfortable as a Virginia mountaineer minus a shotgun.

It was after noon when he arrived at Oldham. He found that town quite as bustling and as up to date as his host had painted it, and his face lighted up, and he drew a deep breath of relief as he caught sight of a uniformed policeman lolling against a lamp-post.

"Looks exactly like a New York cop," he muttered ecstatically. "And if Main Street had a few more people on it and its stores were bigger, I could almost imagine it was dear old Broadway."

He brought his motor cycle to a stop outside a bicycle and sporting-goods store, and arranged with the storekeeper to take care of the machine while he promenaded the town.

Then, with his camera outfit slung over his shoulder, he started up Main Street, his countenance brighter and his step lighter than it had been at any time within the past two days.

At length he came to a brick building, the front of which was ornamented with a big black board, on which, in gilt letters, were the words: Police Headquarters.

It was a very unpretentious-looking building; so different from the headquarters of the New York police force that under other circumstances the sight of it might have brought a patronizing smile to Hawley's face.

But now, after his two long days of exile in the

Catskill wilds, he was in no mood to criticize. The fact that it was a police headquarters was enough for him. The structure seemed to him to be quite an imposing edifice. He surveyed the gilded lettering on the sign with as much satisfaction as a soldier on the battlefield might gaze upon the photograph of the girl he left behind him. Those two magic words made him feel a hundred miles nearer to Park Row, and, therefore, they were more beautiful to him than the loveliest of mountain scenery.

"Police headquarters, eh?" he chuckled, as happy as a sailor enjoying his first liberty after a long cruise. "This Oldham is certainly some town. Guess I'll go in and shake hands with the chief of police."

The ground floor of the building was a drug store. Police headquarters, which occupied the remaining three floors, was reached by a broad stone stairway beside the store entrance.

Hawley ascended the first flight of stairs, and found himself in a long corridor, at the end of which was a door with a panel of frosted glass bearing the sign: "Office of the Chief of Police—Private."

At the head of the stairway was a roll-top desk, at which usually sat a uniformed policeman, whose duty it was to challenge all visitors and prevent them from intruding upon the privacy of the head of the force until their names and the object of their visit had been announced.

But this sentinel happened to be absent from his post. The discipline of the Oldham police force was somewhat lax, and he had slipped out to call on a friend of his who ran a saloon around the corner.

Therefore the Camera Chap's course down the corridor toward the chief's office was unimpeded. Unaware that he was supposed to go through the formality of being announced before approaching this sanctum, he stepped up to the door with the frosted-glass panel, and knocked thereon with his knuckles.

There was no response, but from behind the closed door came a queer sound which bore some resemblance to a buzz saw in action. After a short wait, he knocked again. There was no response, except that the uncanny noise within suddenly grew louder.

Exceedingly curious and somewhat alarmed, the Camera Chap tried the handle of the door, and found that it gave to his touch. As the door opened, he witnessed a queer sight.

In the center of the room was a large, flat desk. On the blotting pad of this desk rested a pair of huge feet. The owner of these feet was a stout man with a very red face and bristly hair cropped very close to his scalp. He reclined in a swinging desk chair which was tilted back at an almost dangerous angle.

The stout, fiery-faced man was in his shirt sleeves. His eyes were closed tight and his mouth was wide open. From the latter issued that volume of sound which Hawley had mistaken for either the workings of a buzz saw or the gurglings of a strangling man.

With a broad grin on his face, the Camera Chap softly closed the door and stepped back into the corridor. The mystery was solved, and he had no desire to disturb the midday slumbers of the head of Oldham's constabulary. He was inclined to believe that the chief would not be pleased to be awakened merely to shake hands with a visitor.

He started to retrace his steps toward the stairway, but suddenly stopped short, and chuckled over an idea which had come to him.

"It's too good an opportunity to pass up," he said to himself, as he unslung the black leather case from his shoulder, opened it, and adjusted his camera. Then he stepped up once more to the door with the frosted-glass panel, and very gently and cautiously pushed it open.

In order to get the proper light for focusing, he had to enter the room and step around to the other side of the desk. This was a somewhat risky procedure, for should the slumbering police chief awaken while his picture was being taken, it would be impossible for the Camera Chap to regain the doorway and make his escape.

Hawley fully realized this danger. He had an idea, too, that the wrath of the head of Oldham's police force would not be a pleasant thing to face, for even in repose his countenance was not an amiable one. But this realization did not cause him to hesitate. The more risk there was attached to the taking of a snapshot, the more he relished it.

He was taking this picture purely for the sport of the thing. He had no intention of using it for publication in his paper. Oldham was too small a town and too far away from New York for the *Sentinel's* readers to be interested in its police chief, either asleep or awake. But the idea of making such a snapshot appealed strongly to Hawley's sense of humor. It would serve as a unique souvenir, too, of his stay in the Catskills.

The stout, red-faced police official was still in the same ungraceful position in which the Camera Chap had left him. He had not moved a muscle, and was still snoring lustily. He was so gross and fat that he looked and sounded more porcine than human. He reminded Hawley of a big prize hog which he had once photographed at a county fair.

Without making the slightest sound, the Camera Chap advanced into the room, rounded the big desk, and placed his camera in position. Prudence suggested an instantaneous snapshot and a quick get-away; but the inertness of the man in the chair offered a favorable opportunity for a time exposure, and as the latter would enable him to obtain a much better picture, Hawley couldn't resist the temptation. Moreover, after he had taken one negative without any signs of returning consciousness on the part of his victim, Hawley grew still more reckless, and decided to take another—just to be on the safe side, in case the first plate should turn out to be a failure.

He got the second picture, but he had tarried just a fraction of a second too long. As his camera clicked, the sleeper abruptly ceased snoring and opened one eye.

The Camera Chap made a dash for the doorway, and as he reached it the chief of police opened the other eye. Then, suddenly wide awake, he brought his huge feet down from the desk to the floor with a crash, and, jumping up from his chair, let out a bellow of rage.

"What are you doing here—with that camera?" he yelled. "Stop! Stop, I say!"

But Hawley did not stop. He dashed down the corridor with the speed of greased lightning, and went down the stairway so quickly that his feet seemed scarcely to touch a single stair.

The chief of police paused just long enough to press a bell button on his desk; then, snorting with rage, he sailed down the corridor in hot pursuit.

CHAPTER III.

IN THE EDITOR'S CHAIR.

The bell button which the chief had pressed communicated with the roll-top desk at the head of the stairs, and if the policeman whose duty it was to sit there had been on the job the Camera Chap would have been nabbed before he reached the street.

But, fortunately for that reckless young man, the guardian of the corridor was still chatting with his friend around the corner, and there was nobody to intercept the fugitive. There were several policemen in the headquarters building, however, and at the sound of their chieftain's angry bellowing they came running out of various doorways, anxious to render assistance, but hampered by the fact that they hadn't the slightest idea of what was expected of them.

The chief did not stop to explain. He rushed savagely down the stairs, intent upon catching the intruder with his own hands. His subordinates, still wondering greatly what all the excitement was about, followed close on his heels. There wasn't a man among them who was not more fleet of foot than the head of the force, but the latter's corpulent body blocked the stairway and prevented them from leading the chase.

At the fifth stair, the chief tripped, lost his balance, and went sprawling to the bottom of the staircase, with half a dozen of his followers on top of him. That mix-up was the salvation of Hawley. While the constabulary of Oldham twisted and squirmed in a tangled heap, he was climbing aboard a trolley car which came past the headquarters building just then. By the time the chief of police and his subordinates had managed to disentangle their respective arms and legs and jump to their feet, the trolley car containing the Camera Chap was more than a block away.

Nevertheless, the latter did not feel entirely safe. The conductor was looking at him suspiciously. Possibly he had seen Hawley dash out of the headquarters building, and was puzzled as to the reason for his undue haste. Besides, the Camera Chap thought it extremely likely that the chief would guess that he had boarded the car.

That he had not overestimated this danger became evident to him a few minutes later, when, glancing out of the rear door of the car, he caught sight of a uniformed policeman seated beside the driver of a butcher's delivery wagon, less than a block behind.

The driver of the wagon was whipping up his horse, and the policeman was pointing toward the car; so Hawley took it for granted that it was himself they were after. To make matters worse—although the policeman no doubt would have overtaken him in the end—the trolley car came to a stop at that moment to let a passenger alight.

"Guess I'm a goner!" said the Camera Chap to himself, with a philosophical grin. "Oh, well, they can't hang me, anyway. It was only a joke. Unless the judge has a prejudice against newspaper men, I ought to be able to get off with a fine."

Then a look of consternation came to his face as he thought of his camera.

"Maybe the laws of this town give them the right to confiscate it," he mused uneasily. "At all events, they'll no doubt smash the plate."

Suddenly, as he glanced out of the car window, his face lighted up. His gaze rested upon a sign on the building ouside which the car had stopped. The sign read:

"Oldham *Daily Bulletin.*—Progressive, Aggressive, and Fearlessly Independent."

Quick as a flash, he leaped from the front door of the car, and, darting across the street, ran into the doorway of the Bulletin Building.

He had no expectation of finding anybody whom he knew within this small-town newspaper office, but there is a masonry among newspaper men the world over, which caused him to feel hopeful that the editor and his staff would not refuse sanctuary to a brother craftsman in distress, even though they had never seen or heard of him before.

The editorial rooms were on the second floor, and were approached by a short flight of stairs. Hawley took these stairs two at a time, and was at the top of the flight before the butcher's delivery wagon which the pursuing constable had pressed into service drew up in front of the building.

Outside the portal of the city room, a small boy was stationed to attend to visitors, for only members of the staff were permitted to walk in without being announced.

This youngster stared curiously at the Camera Chap. "Whoyerwantersee?" he demanded.

"The city editor," replied Hawley; "but don't bother to take in my card, son; I'll take it in myself."

Before the boy could protest against this violation of the office rules, Hawley had hurried past him. The door of the city room was ajar. He pushed it farther open and walked in.

Then he examined the door to see if there was a bolt on the inside. There was none; neither was there a key in the lock. There was a typewriter desk on casters near at hand, however, and he quickly dragged this over to the door. As the door opened inward, it made an effective barricade which would prevent the hand of the law from reaching in and grabbing him before he had a chance to introduce himself to the *Bulletin's* staff, and ask protection.

The three or four young men seated at flat desks in the big room glanced up from their typewriters and stared curiously at this visitor, who was so coolly taking liberties with the office furniture. The Camera Chap nodded pleasantly to them, and passed on to the other end of the room, where the city editor sat at a roll-top desk mounted on a low platform.

The city editor was broad-shouldered, and his shirt sleeves were rolled up to his elbows, revealing a pair of brawny forearms. He sat with his back toward the rest of the room, and was so engrossed in a piece of "copy" he was reading that he did not see or hear Hawley step up to him.

"I beg your pardon, sir," the latter began. "My name is Hawley, and I'm on the staff of the New York *Sentinel.* I——"

He got no further. The man at the desk swung sharply around in his revolving chair, with an exclamation of joyous astonishment.

"The Camera Chap!" he cried. "By all that's wonderful!"

Hawley echoed his exclamation of joyous astonish-

ment. This young man who was holding down the editor's chair was no stranger to him. His name was Fred Carroll, and he had once been a reporter on the staff of the New York *Sentinel*.

"You, Fred!" he exclaimed, heartily grasping the editor's hand. "Well, this certainly is a surprise! I had no idea that I'd find you here. So that's why you've been missing from Park Row these past two years, eh?"

The editor of the Oldham *Bulletin* grinned. "Yes, that's the answer, old man. But how about yourself? What on earth are you doing in this burg? Haven't come here to look for a job, have you?"

The laugh which accompanied this last sentence showed that he did not intend the question to be taken seriously. He knew very well that the Camera Chap was too high-grade a man to come to a small town to seek employment—that there wasn't a newspaper in New York which wasn't eager to sign a contract with him.

"Oh, no, I'm still with the *Sentinel*, and have no intention of making a change," Hawley answered smilingly. "I'm here merely on a little vacation. But I'm afraid I've hurt the feelings of your chief of police, and—— Hello! How on earth did *you* get in here?"

The last remark was addressed to an office boy who had approached the editor's desk while Hawley was speaking. It was the same boy who had been on guard outside the door of the editorial room a few minutes before, and as the desk which he had used as a barricade was still against this door, Hawley wondered how the youngster had managed to enter the room.

The boy soon enlightened him. "Thought you was smart, didn't yer?" he said resentfully. "Didn't know there was two doors to this room, did yer?"

"What's the trouble, Miggsy?" inquired Carroll, with an indulgent smile. "Judging from your words and your manner, I gather that you don't altogether approve of this gentleman."

"Gentleman!" repeated Miggsy, with a scornful glance at the Camera Chap. "He ain't no gentleman, Mr. Carroll. Don't you let him fool yer. He's a crook and a fujertive from justice, sir. That's what he is."

"Indeed!" cried Carroll, winking at Hawley, but pretending to be greatly horrified by this disclosure. "A fugitive from justice in this office! What crime has the miscreant committed, Miggsy?"

"I couldn't tell you that, sir," replied the boy. "I asked the cop, but he didn't know."

"The cop?" repeated the editor, his eyebrows arched interrogatively.

"Yessir. That's what I've come in to tell you about, Mr. Carroll. There's a sergeant from headquarters waiting outside. He wants this feller here. Says he's sent by the chief to place him under arrest."

"Oh, is that so?" said Carroll, with an ironical smile. "Well, of course the *Bulletin* is always glad to accommodate the chief. You go out, Miggsy, and tell that sergeant to come around again about a month from now."

TO BE CONTINUED.

DOUBTFUL ABOUT HIS FUTURE.

The boy was all right, notwithstanding his girly curls, and a fond mother who was deathly afraid he was going to become coarse and vulgar, and in other respects masculine.

One day a gentleman calling at the house engaged him in conversation.

"Well, my boy," he said, after some time, "what are you going to do when you grow up?"

The boy studied the question a moment.

"Really," he replied, at last, "I don't know. I suppose I ought to be a man, but from the way mamma is handling me, I'm almost afraid I'm going to be a lady."

TAKING HIM DOWN.

A certain Edinburgh magnate, who was not a very great favorite with the public, met a small boy bearing a basket in which lay a magnificent salmon.

"Eh, laddie, who is that fish for?" he inquired, his mouth watering at the sight.

"Dae ye ken Bailie Adams, wha bides up by in Smith Street?" said the boy, giving the questioner's own name and address.

"Aye! fine that, laddie!" replied the gourmand, his eyes glistening with expectation.

"Weel—it's no' for him!"

HOW HE USED THE POROUS PLASTER.

"Well, Mr. Malone, did the porous plaster which I sent you help your back?" inquired the doctor.

"Well, doctor," replied the patient, "Oi can't say that it has helped me much yet; but maybe it will. You know it was only last night Oi took it."

"Took it! What do you mean?"

"Mane! Why, sure, Oi mane that Oi chewed and chewed for half an hour on the ould thing, and then Oi had to bolt it down hull. Seems to me if they'd bile 'em a little more and not put so much pepper in, they'd be easier to chew up, and wouldn't scorch a body's insoide so."

NO FALSEHOOD.

The other day two men were talking about their respective gardens, when one of them remarked that he had planted some seed and it was up in two days and looked well.

"That's nothing," chimed in a boy who was standing near; "my father sowed some the other day and it was up in less than an hour."

"You should not tell falsehoods, boy," remonstrated the man who had spoken first, "it's a bad plan."

"It's the truth," declared the boy, "cos the chickens scratched 'em up."

WHICH WAS THE VICTOR.

An Irishman and a negro had agreed to settle the question who was the better man.

They also agreed that as soon as one was satisfied he should indicate the fact to the other by simply saying:

"Sufficient!"

After pounding each other for some time, the Irishman sang out:

"Sufficient!"

Whereupon, much to the Hibernian's disgust, the negro exclaimed:

"Sho—I've been tryin' to think of dat word for twenty minutes."

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

No Monotony in His Work.

The New York municipal commission on standardization of salaries has been sending to each and every city employee a blank form, on which one of the questions to be answered was:

"Do your duties vary?"

The answer of the man who makes the wooden boxes in which those who die at the Metropolitan Hospital, on Blackwell's Island, are buried, was:

"Yes; I make some large coffins and some small ones."

Not a Nibble, Fined Twenty Dollars.

It isn't necessary to catch fish to be a fisherman in New Jersey. Alec Buckowski was seated beside Kesslers Pond with a pole and line in his hand. He hadn't had a bite since he arrived there at daybreak. But a game warden got him, and Justice Pickersgill, of Perth Amboy, N. J., ruled that he was a fisherman, and fined him twenty dollars for not having a license.

Seventy-eight Thousand Horses for Allies.

Seventy-eight thousand horses for the French army will be purchased in this country within the next five weeks, according to Lieutenant Count de Shgergrise, who is in Philadelphia, Pa., buying animals.

Can't Make Guns for Allies.

An order by one of the allies for six hundred thousand rifles was offered to the William Todd Company, in Youngstown, Ohio, but it was rejected because the big manufacturing plant is busy making shells for the United States government.

Best Baseball Players Come from the Country.

A boy born in the country stands a much better chance of becoming a star baseball player than if he is a city-born boy. If he is born in the summer, he has a big advantage over the boy whose birthday is in the months from November to April, inclusive.

These are the conclusions of Arthur MacDonald, of Washington, D. C., who is interested in the scientific study of the ball player and of those things that go to make for his success, outside of natural ability to play ball which he shows, and of the scientific side of which he knows nothing, and probably cares less, so long as he can get his bimonthly check.

Being born between May and October and being in the country—which means a place with fewer than 30,000 inhabitants—helps, according to the data about the lives of 146 of the crack players of the major-league clubs. It makes one think of Frank Daniels' song, "Never be born on a Friday, 'tis a most unlucky day." Yet Mr. MacDonald takes the matter seriously, and shows that of the admittedly best players in the game, 61 per cent were born in the country and 69 per cent in the warmer months, against 39 and 31 per cent, respectively, for the city-born who first saw the light of day in the colder months. Furthermore, he points out that similar conditions exist in the highly successful in other trades and professions.

Similarly analyzing records, he finds that players under 5 feet 11 inches in height are better batters and fielders than those who are taller, and that the superiority is greater in batting than in fielding. Thus, the taller men, who batted for an average of .250 or better, were only 43 per cent of the whole, while the shorter men had a percentage of 62. Sixty-six per cent of the shorter men had a fielding average of .950 or better, and only 58 per cent of the taller men got into that charmed circle of players.

With a general average of 5 feet 9½ inches, for all of a group of 150 players, statistics of whom were available, the pitchers averaged within a fifth of an inch of six feet in height, with their eighteen catchers an inch and a half shorter, the shortstops being the pygmies among players, with an average height of 5 feet 9½ inches. Catchers are the heaviest, with an average weight of 178 pounds, and shortstops the lightest, their average being 167.

Mr. MacDonald has dug some curious facts out of the statistics personally collected at games. These show that only 20 per cent of fair balls batted result in safe hits. Of the 10,074 batted balls of which he has records, 20 per cent were fly balls, 51 per cent grounders, 3 per cent bunts, and 9 per cent line drives. The latter are the best balls to hit, for 77 per cent resulted in safe hits, while the percentage of grounders was only 8, and of bunts 45. Of the long fly balls, 20 per cent were turned into safe hits and four-tenths of 1 per cent were muffed by the fielders, showing these to be poor productive hits, and incidentally that it is a rare thing for a fielder to muff a batted ball.

Will Make Writing Easier.

Two recent inventions—one by a Texas man and the other by a Chicagoan—bid fair to make writing an easier task and far less tiring.

One is a device for use with any pen or pencil. A grip is provided for the fingers of the writer, and the shape of the device, with a weight placed in the lower portion of it, makes the movement of the writing instrument an easy matter.

The other invention is a pen and pencil holder. Slipped over the end of a pen or pencil, this device, which is provided with a sleeve through which the index finger is passed, also makes writing a thing to be enjoyed.

Obtains Oldest Gypsy Jewel.

A four-thousand-year-old amethyst necklace, worn by the crown princess of Egypt in 2684 B. C., has recently been received by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The unique treasure of antiquity was unearthed by Professor Petrie at Lahun, in Egypt, where the pyramid of Senusert II. stands, near the entrance to the Fayun.

Doctor Petrie did some valuable excavating work there twenty-five years ago. He found a will far older than any previously known, and discovered how the Egyptians produced fire.

Last spring, his eagerness for the work took him back to that neighborhood, and he tackled the old pyramid it-

self. In a mud-covered niche he uncovered the finest collection of jewelry ever seen in Egypt by a foreign archæologist, and the marvelous amethyst set which now comes to the Boston Museum is a part of that discovery.

The necklace consists of eighty-eight beads of unusually rich coloring and remarkably well preserved, the four-thousand-year-old string measuring twenty-eight inches in length. The beads are regularly graded and artistically strung. The necklace was the property of the daughter of Senusert II., of the twelfth dynasty in Egypt.

The inscription on her alabaster funerary jars bears the title, "Royal Daughter, Sat-Hathor-ant," or Crown Princess Sat.

Oldest "Grad" Gets Diploma.

John Taggart, whose age is seventy, the oldest graduate in any 1915 college class in Ohio, has just received his diploma. President Baxter, of Franklin College, at New Athens, presented it to him.

In 1882, Taggart completed his junior year, but was forced to quit because he lacked funds. He started teaching, and this week received his "sheepskin."

Veteran Rivermen See Last "Drive" in St. Croix.

One hundred men, old of body and halt of limb, but strong of heart and of spirit and of mind, stood on the old steamboat landing in the Dalles of the St. Croix, near Taylors Falls, Minn., a few days ago, and watched a little raft of logs drift lazily down the stream.

Then they turned away, and their eyes were wet with tears, for they had seen the last remnant of an industry once the mightiest in the land, and in which they had played varying parts, and in such parts had been more or less controlling figures in the building of an empire, pass out on the waters which had borne the products of their labors, and pass, never to return.

Seventy-seven years ago, the first raft passed the Dalles of the St. Croix, bound for the mills at Stillwater. Seven years ago the last real "jam" entered the boom in what is now a great interstate park. And when the meager collection of "deadheads" started on its downward journey the final reminder of the historic days of the "canthook" and "peavey" went to rest.

The once great logging business of the Yellow, Namegedon, and St. Croix Rivers is but history—it fell into the discard with this last "drive," merely a few old dead heads, the result of the log reclamation work of the government crews, and the men who gazed at the end of their life work were gathered together at one last "logging dinner," to fittingly commemorate the death of an interest that held them to life.

Park Commissioner George H. Hazzard and a committee of the Taylors Falls Commercial Club secured "Charley" Olson, a camp cook and woods cruiser, who is known wherever lumbermen congregate, to prepare a great logging dinner, and, besides the old woodsmen who came from all sections of the country, about one hundred and fifty business men from the towns of the St. Croix valley were present at the "feed." The old fellows sat at one long table, which had been laid in the midst of the rocks of the park.

"Uncle" John Dobney, the oldest white settler alive in Minnesota, and the first man to ride a log past Taylors Falls—he is ninety-six years old, and who also took a final "buck" in the drive seven years ago—was present at the dinner. The little old man, who for all his years is hale and hearty, presented a pathetic picture as he stood on a great rock overlooking the river, and bade Godspeed to the logs.

Professor Swenson, of the department of commerce, University of Minnesota, addressed the business men after the dinner. He talked on "business psychology."

Ohio's Best Speller to Challenge Nation.

Claude C. Gossett, of Hillsboro, Ohio, a twenty-year-old high-school boy, was declared the champion speller of the State after he had made a grade of 87 in a written test on 100 particularly difficult words. The test was resorted to as a final means of discovering the survivor among the thirty-three who could not be caught on a 5,000-word list.

Young Gossett has now announced that he may challenge all State champions to contest for the national championship. He became king of Ohio's spellers after a twelve-hour battle royal with seventy-four county champions.

It was close to midnight when an additional written test of 100 "brain twisters," submitted to each of the thirty-three survivors, showed Gossett, with a grade of 87 per cent, had won the championship.

Here are thirteen words the champion failed on, the correct spelling first and Gossett's second: Capias—capius; vitreous—vitrius; referable—referrable; soirée—soire; melada—malada; opelousas—oppaloosa; thesaurus—thesorus; igneous—ignius; paulospore—polospore; patois—patua; doubloon—dablune; dytiscus—disticus; niccolite—nichellite.

A prize of fifty dollars in cash and a set of books went to the winner.

Louis Kern, Hocking County, and Homer Jacobs, Jackson County, tied for second and third, with 85 words right; each got twenty dollars.

Other winners and their grades were: Marian L. Cross, Brown County, fourth, 84; Lois Snedecker, Delaware County, and Sadie Buchanan, Morgan County, tied for fifth, 83.

Free Doughnuts for Crowd.

Just to prove that they could, twenty-five girls of the domestic-science department of the Baker High School, in Baker, Ore., baked more than one thousand doughnuts and gave them away to visitors recently.

Eighteen girls rolled out and cut and plunged circular pieces of dough into hot lard for three hours, while six served the hundred that ate the doughnuts, praised them, and asked for more.

The feat was part of the annual school exhibit of the public schools, and the girls put on the "doughnut-day" feature at the domestic-science rooms of the high school.

Send Her a Note with Candy.

Hereafter "sweets to the sweet" can go by parcel post with a no less saccharine billet-doux attached and at a far less charge than the government formerly fixed for such shipments.

It isn't only for candies with love notes attached that Uncle Sam has made this beneficent ruling, however. Any kind of article, no matter how prosaic, provided it is permissible parcel-post matter, can be shipped with a letter attached, and not be liable for the prohibitive mail costs formerly made.

By a ruling of the post-office department, it is now allowable to attach a letter to a parcel-post package and pay for the former as first-class mail, while the package is paid for as fourth class.

Rules in vogue formerly called for the payment of first-class mail charges on packages to which letters were attached.

Letters and parcels mailed together in the manner now permissible, reach addresses at the same time. This is often desirable and convenient, and serves to prevent misunderstanding and avoids confusion, and facilitates the transaction of business.

Old War Drum is Exhibited.

A drum that went through the first battle of Bull Run is on display in the window of a local store, at Junction City, Kan. Other interesting Civil War relics on display are the first flag raised at Yorktown, Va., on May 4, 1862, by Lieutenant W. H. White, now of Junction City; also views of Fort Warren, Boston Harbor, taken in 1864.

Real "Jimmy Valentine" in a Safe-opening Test.

Following a brief career of crime which he declares was suggested to him by the play "Alias Jimmy Valentine," William T. Smith, twenty-two years old, of Newark, N. J., who says he is a Dartmouth graduate, electrician, inventor, chauffeur, and butler, is a prisoner in the New York Tombs charged with the theft of jewels worth eight thousand dollars from the home of Mrs. George T. Richards, of Media, Pa.

That Smith, if such is his name, is clever in his line was evidenced soon after he was brought to New York on extradition proceedings. He was asked how he had opened the safe in the Richards home in Media, and he replied: "With the sense of touch, aided by good hearing." Inspector Faurot, who was investigating Smith, doubted this, and he asked the prisoner if he could open the safe in the office of Assistant District Attorney Dickinson, to whom he admits he made a confession of his crime.

"I can open any safe if tumblers are a part of the combination," replied the mysterious young prisoner.

"Go to it!" commanded Inspector Faurot doubtingly.

Smith grasped the knob with one hand, pressed his ear to the door of the safe, turned the knob to right and left several times, rose to his feet, and, to the surprise of those in the room, swung open the door. The operation required only five minutes, and it surprised the detectives present and served to confirm their impression that Smith's assertion that he had committed his first and only robbery was false.

Smith tells a remarkable story, which, however, the police do not believe, because it does not agree with certain vital facts collected by Detectives Olliver and Fennelly of New York, and Detective Kuhne, of Newark, who arrested Smith for burglary, and a day or two later arrested Joseph Cooney, a bookkeeper employed in the Bank of Commerce of Philadelphia, as his accomplice. After being held in Media, Pa., for trial, they were brought to New York to testify against Andes Stein, a jeweler, who, it is charged, purchased the stolen gems for a mere song.

The gems, valued at eight thousand dollars, have not yet been recovered. Smith and Cooney told the police that they sold the loot to Stein for two thousand dollars, of which sum they received five hundred dollars, and that he ignored them when they appeared at his place to collect the balance. Stein denied the story of the men, and a close search of his place by the detectives failed to reveal the stolen property. Nevertheless, he was charged with purchasing stolen property, and bail was set at seventy-five hundred dollars, which he furnished.

"They are trying to make a Jimmy Valentine out of me," said Smith. "It is true, I saw the play some time ago and watched the big scene where Jimmy opens the safe, but it was not until long afterward that the thought of operating along Jimmy's lines entered my mind. I have a natural gift of a mechanician in that direction, and that is how I came to pull off the Richards robbery."

The young man explained that in the course of his employment as electrician, he wired many safes and learned how to manipulate combinations. After nine months of the work, during which period he gained knowledge of electrical science and learned how to open safes by touch and hearing, he went to Staunton, Va., where he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps.

"I served for two years at Norfolk," he said, "and then bought my discharge for one hundred and twenty-two dollars and returned to my family. When I enlisted I swore that I was twenty-two years old, when, as a matter of fact, I was only eighteen. When I met my father in the summer of 1912, he urged me to give up my roving life and go to college. He arranged my entrance into Dartmouth College, where I remained two years, graduating last fall.

"When the *Titanic* went down, I invented an electrical device for use of masters of steamships in the detection of icebergs; but I was unable to promote my scheme. I made up my mind to engage in the motion-picture business and earn money to promote my invention. My father refused to aid me financially. Last January I saw an advertisement inserted by Mrs. Richards for a butler, and I went to Media, Pa., and answered it in person and obtained the billet. I was well treated and at that time had no thought of robbery.

"Early in February, Gwynne Richards, the fifteen-year-old son of the Richards, came into the garage and told me about the valuable gems which his mother had bought in Egypt. I went to Philadelphia a few days later and met Joseph Cooney, a clerk in the Bank of Commerce, to whom I revealed the presence of the jewelry in the Richards household.

"After some talk, Cooney agreed to help me, and he went to Media on February 13. There was a birthday party in honor of Miss Wayne Richards at the Richards home, and we decided to pull off the job that night.

"Why the New York detectives are trying to make a great mystery of me, I cannot understand," said Smith. "I am not concealing my identity under an alias, but for family reasons I do not want to drag my father's name into this mess. He is in business, and if I were to reveal his name and address, he might suffer."

Gets Bible Lost in Battle.

George C. Stacey, Civil War veteran, of Norwalk, Ohio, has returned a well-worn Bible, issued to troops and lost on the battlefield of Peach Tree Creek, Georgia, on July 20, 1864, to Frederick C. Will, of Oconomowoc, Wis.

For fifty years Stacey has sought the owner of the Bible. Will's name was written in the book, but Stacey was unable to get trace of him until recently.

Ohio and Wisconsin regiments took part in the battle.

Girl's Picture in Berry Box.

Her photograph, with her name and a coy request that the purchaser write to her inscribed upon the back, placed in the bottom of a box of luscious strawberries which she had packed, has brought seventeen proposals of marriage to Miss Lillian Avenzo, a petite brunette, who lives near Independence, La.

The car containing the crate in which was the box with the girl's photograph left Independence last month for Milwaukee. A college located at Superior, Wis., purchased several crates from this shipment, and when the young men of the institution discovered the photograph of the Louisiana lassie, there was a rush for writing materials, and Miss Avenzo's mail has been quite heavy during the past two weeks.

Three of the suitors for the "strawberry maid's" hand declare they will proceed to Independence at once to claim her if she gives them the slightest encouragement.

An Iowa Fugitive-slave Case.

Although the Dredd Scott case is the best-known fugitive-slave case in American history, it is interesting to note the fact that as early as 1839, during the territorial days, a similar case came before the supreme court of Iowa. "In the year 1834," says a writer in one of the publications of the State Historical Society of Iowa, "a slave owner named Montgomery, living in Missouri, entered into a written agreement with a slave, one Ralph, to the effect that upon payment by Ralph of five hundred and fifty dollars, with interest from January 1, 1835, he was to become free." In order to earn money with which to purchase his freedom, Ralph made his way up the Mississippi and found employment in the lead mines in the vicinity of Dubuque. Five years passed and still the ex-slave was unable to earn and save enough money to make any payments to his former master. At this juncture, 1839, two kidnapers from Virginia appeared at the mines, learned the situation with regard to Ralph, and wrote to Montgomery, offering to return the negro for the sum of one hundred dollars. The offer was accepted, but as the kidnapers were making away with their unfortunate prey, they were brought before the court on a writ of habeas corpus. The case went up to the supreme court of the Territory of Iowa, and Judge Charles Mason rendered a decision, giving Ralph his freedom.

Madman Shoots Down Three.

Fred Shaver, of Jamestown, N. Y., shot and killed his father, his stepmother, and a policeman, and was himself killed by other officers. He was twenty-one years old.

Shaver's act is attributed to a quarrel with his father. He is said to have been crazed by a lack of money. The father, Hudson Shaver, sixty-seven years old, and well to do, recently married Ruth Campbell, thirty-seven years old.

The sound of the first shot attracted Officer Kendall, who ran up the stairway. Young Shaver shot the policeman in the chest and hip, and these wounds proved to be fatal an hour later. The murderer then barricaded himself in the apartment.

Shaver frequently appeared at a window, defying the policemen who had surrounded the building. Occasionally he drank from a bottle. The last time Shaver appeared in the window with his rifle several policemen stationed across the street fired, and he fell back to the floor. The officers broke open the door and found young Shaver dead.

Dies Disinfecting Bodies.

Doctor Auguste Chaillou, a young physician connected with the Pasteur Institute, in Paris, was killed while carrying out the dangerous task of disinfecting bodies lying between the French and German lines. The glittering can containing the disinfectant he carried caught the eye of a German sentinel, and fire was opened with trench mortars. One of the shells struck Doctor Chaillou, killing him instantly.

Fifteen Children Lose Fathers.

Fifteen children were left fatherless by an accident at a grade crossing at Grovania, near Danville, Pa. Theodore Deihl, accompanied by his uncle, was covering a meat route in an auto delivery truck, in crossing the railroad at the point named above, a view of the main track was obscured by freight cars standing on a siding. The men knew nothing of danger until they were in front of a fast train on another track. Both men were killed and the auto was reduced to splinters.

Theodore Deihl leaves a wife and two infants; the uncle, Levi Deihl, leaves a wife and thirteen children.

Unique Way to Save Money.

Martin Burgess, who went to California in 1855, mined successfully, returned east in 1879, and is now in Live Oaks, visiting friends, tells a strange story.

In 1879 he deposited in a San Francisco savings bank forty-five hundred dollars and started east to visit relatives. In St. Louis he was stricken with paralysis. He lost all memory of his past life, in two years' time regaining his health, but could recall little of his California career.

Last February he paid a visit to the hospital in which he was treated, and was handed a package of papers he had left in 1879. In the package was a certificate of deposit for money in the San Francisco bank.

Burgess established his identity upon presenting himself at the bank a month ago, and received his deposit with compound interest, the total amount handed over being over thirty-six thousand dollars. Burgess cleaned up a fortune in six months' placer mining in El Dorado County in 1856, but lost most of it speculating. Later he made and lost two fortunes.

Two Stockbrokers and Patsy Off on 10,000-mile Canoe Trip.

Accompanied by their Irish terrier Patsy, James G. Hurty and Charles Marcelle, stockbrokers, left the Columbia Yacht Club, near New York, the other morning in a twenty-five-foot canoe for a ten-thousand-mile trip around the eastern part of the United States that will require eighteen months to complete.

At the clubhouse, to see them off, was a small party of friends and relatives, among them Miss Anna Hurty, who accompanied them to Tarrytown, where other rela-

tives were waiting to wish them good luck. By the time they reached that place, Patsy, who was inclined to be seasick, got his sea legs on, and all was well.

The canoe, specially built for the trip, is decked over for about one-half its length. Under this deck is carried a tent, cots, and a complete but compact camp equipment, as well as a small supply of food. There are also guns and fishing tackle, as the pair expect to live off the country for a large part of their journey.

The canoe is fitted with a motor that gives the craft a speed of about eight knots an hour in smooth water, and will eliminate most of the hard work that usually accompanies a canoe trip.

This is the first time a trip of this length has been attempted, but Hurty and Marcell are confident they will make it in safety. To their mind the only danger spots are in the Great Lakes, where they figure they will have to hug close to the shore line to avoid the heavy storms that suddenly arise in those waters. The Atlantic has no terrors for them.

The canoeists expect to reach Albany, and thence they will proceed to the Erie Canal, to the lakes, to the Chicago River, to the drainage canal, and into the Illinois and the Mississippi Rivers. They will float down the Father of Waters to New Orleans and the Gulf, skirting the shores until Charlotte River, Florida, is reached. They will proceed through that to the Caloosahatchie River into Lake Okeechobee, and through a canal to the Atlantic. Then they proceed north to New York via the inside route.

"The only question in my mind," said Mr. Hurty, before they shoved off, "is how much of this equipment we will bring back. We have been careful to eliminate everything we can get along without, but it is a cinch that before we get to Chicago we will find that we have some things we can get along without and left out things that we will have to get.

"If we have not, that will be a more remarkable thing than the trip itself."

Hurty, whose eyes are the real reason for the trip, the oculists having advised that he quit his desk for a year or more in the open, says his optics have already begun to improve.

"But," he added, "I'll bet New York will look awful good to me when I get back here again."

United States Will Aid Blind.

Miss Winifred Holt, keeper of the "Lighthouse," the institution of the New York Association for the Blind, sailed on the steamer *Rochambeau*, of the French line, for Bordeaux, to organize a corps of workers abroad who will look after the immediate needs of victims of the European War who have lost their sight. Assistance in teaching them to become self-supporting will be the object of the work.

Eleven-year-old Girl Murdered.

Two tiny gray hairs may aid the police in solving the fiendish murder of Elizabeth (Dorothy) Nolte, aged eleven years, whose mutilated body was found in an areaway of her home, 1411 Central Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio.

The hairs were discovered in the palm of the girl's right hand. Though the murderer had gone over the remains thoroughly, washing away every trace of blood, he could not erase this small clew. On one hair was a bit of tobacco of almost unnoticeable size.

Two persons, a white man and a negro, are being held by the police. Both are young, have no gray hair, and protest their innocence. The girl's body was without clothing, wrapped in a sheet, and had been brought back to the home of her mother after the child had been attacked and murdered.

Love in Postal Harness; Romance in Two Pages.

Down among the cape jessamines, the magnolias, and the cotton bolls of Paige, Bastrop County, Texas, Miss Ida B. Sternenberg, postmistress, sorted the mail that a train dumped twice daily, except Sunday, on the depot platform.

Up among the wheat and prairie dogs of Page, Holt County, Nebraska, P. E. Chase, postmaster, did likewise with the letters and mail-order catalogues that a Burlington train brought into town occasionally.

Now and then Postmistress Sternenberg would discover in an arriving pouch a letter that should have gone to Page, Neb. And then and now Postmaster Chase would come across a letter that had strayed far from Paige, Texas. There was correspondence with Washington. Then there was correspondence between the United States fourth-class post offices of Page, Neb., and Paige, Texas, followed shortly by Postmaster Chase's departure for Paige, Texas, on a business trip, according to the Page *Weekly Reporter*. Business in hand disposed of, Postmaster Chase goes home.

Tuesday he alighted in Kansas City, Mo., from a morning Missouri Pacific train from Omaha. He engaged rooms at the Hotel Muehlebach. Who should step from an afternoon "Katy" train from San Antonio but Postmistress Sternenberg?

The Reverend H. S. Church, the "marrying parson"—thirty-three knots tied last week and more than that some weeks—is called. At five o'clock, in Room 328, he says the fateful words. Paige has lost its postmistress. Its loss is Page's gain.

But the United States Official Postal Guide is a book of many Pages. For instance, Page, Iowa; Page, Kan.; Page, Minn.; Page, Neb.; Page, N. Y.; Page, N. D.; Page, Okla.; Page, Wash.; Page, W. Va.; Page, Cal.; Paige, Texas; Paige, Va.; not to mention Pageland, S. C.; Pageton, W. Va.; Pageville, Ky., and Pageville, Mont.

Here were fourteen chances for a romance to go awry. Kismet!

Cameron Dam Heroine Quits Stage for Farm.

The "back-to-the-land" movement has engulfed Myra Dietz Newman, daughter of John F. Dietz, of Marinette, Wis., "the defender of Cameron Dam," who, as newspaper readers are well aware, for several years stood off armed agents of the law and private concerns, and was finally landed in prison, from which institution it is expected he will be released on parole this year or next, in answer to petitions that are said to contain tens of thousands of names.

After a few years of stage life and association in the movie business with her husband, B. E. Newman, Myra has decided that, after all, the life on the farm is the best. Mr. and Mrs. Newman have purchased two hundred and forty acres of farm land in Marinette County, near

Wausaukee, and will locate on it as soon as they can have suitable buildings erected and get the land under cultivation.

"The stage and the movies are all right," said Mrs. Newman, "but there is nothing like farming. I love every farm animal there is. I haven't really enjoyed stage or movie life half as much as farm life, and I have always looked forward to the day when we could settle down on a farm. We heard of some other people who bought farms in Marinette County, and decided to look the county over. We intend to settle down for keeps on the farm. We are convinced that it's the best place on earth."

Mrs. Newman was badly injured during the fight at Cameron Dam. A few days before the final battle, while driving home with a brother, she was shot by deputies in ambush, and so badly wounded that for days her life was despaired of. She ultimately recovered, and it was while moving pictures of the "Battle of Cameron Dam" were being made that she met Newman. A movie romance soon sprang up, that in time resulted in Myra Dietz becoming Mrs. Newman.

Captain Geddes "Died Game."

"Poor Captain Geddes was killed, but he died game," read a letter written by Hugh Kerr-Wilson, private in the Seventy-ninth Cameron Highlanders. Wilson was writing to his father at St. Laurent, near Winnipeg, where John Geddes, former Chicago Board of Trade operator, who was a captain in the Canadian troops which figured so prominently in the Ypres fighting, had lived of late.

"After being shot through the legs in the charge—at Ypres, April 16th—he crawled around on his hands and knees, giving orders until they did for him," wrote young Wilson.

Aged 120, He Seeks Pension.

Alexander Bates, of Bolivar, Mo., claiming to be one hundred and twenty years old, has made application for a pension. His application states that Bates is a Mexican War veteran and that he enlisted at Lexington in 1845.

Five Austrians Taken in United States.

Five Austrians who succeeded in getting out of Canada since the outbreak of the war, were arrested at Thief River Falls, Minn., and will be returned across the border. The party crossed the line but a short time ago, when the Winnipeg band of Austrians tried to reach the States.

Smoke of Burning Plant Gives Edison an Idea Worth Millions.

Even the sight of the flames as they were burning out his great works in West Orange, N. J., on the night of December 9th, inspired in the brain of Thomas A. Edison the idea for a new invention, and the result became known when announcement was made at his laboratory of the perfection of a fireman's lamp, which, it is estimated, will save millions of dollars' worth of property annually because of its smoke-penetrating ability.

Mr. Edison viewed the progress of the flames that ate out the heart of his mammoth plant here from the seventh floor of his storage-battery building. When one of his employees came to him with word that it would be impossible to save some glass jars containing several thousand dollars' worth of uncut diamonds for use in the diamond-disk phonograph, Mr. Edison is reported to have asked:

"Have the flames reached the phonograph building yet?"

"No."

"Then, why can't you save those diamonds?"

"The smoke is too thick. A couple of us have been in there, groping around, but can't find the jars."

Turning to his wife after the employee had departed, Mr. Edison declared that smoke must be overcome at fires, and it was then that he conceived the idea of constructing the lamp now perfected. Before he went home that night he had drawn a rough design.

From that time on experiments were carried on continually, and a large amount of money expended on them. The lamp has been tested for the last week and found to be the most powerful portable electric light of its size and kind ever constructed. The tests have been carried on at a few local fires, in the "fume room" of the Edison chemical works at Silver Lake, in the boiler rooms filled with steam and other places, and the results have exceeded expectations.

The battery which feeds the lamp weighs only two pounds and is strapped about the body of the fireman. On his helmet is pinned the incandescent lamp, incased in a powerful reflector, which, if broken, automatically cuts off the current, thereby preventing the possibility of the explosion of inflammable gases. The battery, which is constructed of all steel, will not spill, and to operate requires but to close a connecting pin on the top, which completes a circuit, lighting up the incandescent bulb. It will burn ten hours without recharging.

Following the announcement a week ago of the invention by the famous scientist of the most powerful portable searchlight ever constructed, the Edison laboratory has been flooded with queries from all parts of the country regarding the new apparatus. A number of mining and railroad companies have asked Mr. Edison to furnish them with lights of the same type, but less powerful, and last week representatives of three European belligerents were at the works here and placed orders for the same type of searchlight for use in field operations.

Barber Goes Nine Hundred Miles to "Trim" Customer.

Carl Zahn, head barber of the Plaza Hotel, New York City, started Tuesday on a nine-hundred-mile journey to shave a man and cut his hair. That is, he started on a four-hundred-and-fifty-mile jaunt, and he must come back. It was like this:

W. G. Green, of Denver, who has been at the Plaza, thought no barber could cut his hair and shave him so well as Zahn. Mr. Green went to White Sulphur Springs, W. Va., to stay at the Greenbrier. He thought that he would be away for three days, and suddenly changed his mind and decided to stay three weeks.

He needed a hair cut, and the management of the Plaza received a telegram asking that Zahn be sent to White Sulphur Springs to serve Mr. Green as before.

Fred Sterry, managing director of the Plaza, knew that Mr. Green meant what he said, and Zahn was sent in the train that left at eight minutes past five o'clock. The fare is about fifty dollars. A shave and hair cut in the Plaza costs sixty cents.

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739—The Dead Accomplice.
746—The Secret Entrance.
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749—A Voice from the Past.
752—The Spider's Web.
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754—The Rajah's Regalia.
755—Saved from Death.
756—The Man Inside.
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758—The Poisoner of Exill.
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760—The House of Slumber.
761—A Double Identity.
762—"The Mocker's" Stratagem.
763—The Man that Came Back.
764—The Tracks in the Snow.
765—The Babbington Case.
766—The Masters of Millions.
767—The Blue Stain.
768—The Lost Clew.
770—The Turn of a Card.
771—A Message in the Dust.
772—A Royal Flush.
774—The Great Buddha Beryl.
775—The Vanishing Heiress.
776—The Unfinished Letter.
777—A Difficult Trail.
782—A Woman's Stratagem.
783—The Cliff Castle Affair.
784—A Prisoner of the Tomb.
785—A Resourceful Foe.
789—The Great Hotel Tragedies.
795—Zanoni, the Transfigured.
796—The Lure of Gold.
797—The Man With a Chest.
798—A Shadowed Life.
799—The Secret Agent.
800—A Plot for a Crown.
801—The Red Button.
802—Up Against It.
803—The Gold Certificate.
804—Jack Wise's Hurry Call.
805—Nick Carter's Ocean Chase.
807—Nick Carter's Advertisement.
808—The Kregoff Necklace.
811—Nick Carter and the Nihilists.
812—Nick Carter and the Convict Gang.
813—Nick Carter and the Guilty Governor.
814—The Triangle Coin.
815—Ninety-nine—and One.
816—Coin Number 77.

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